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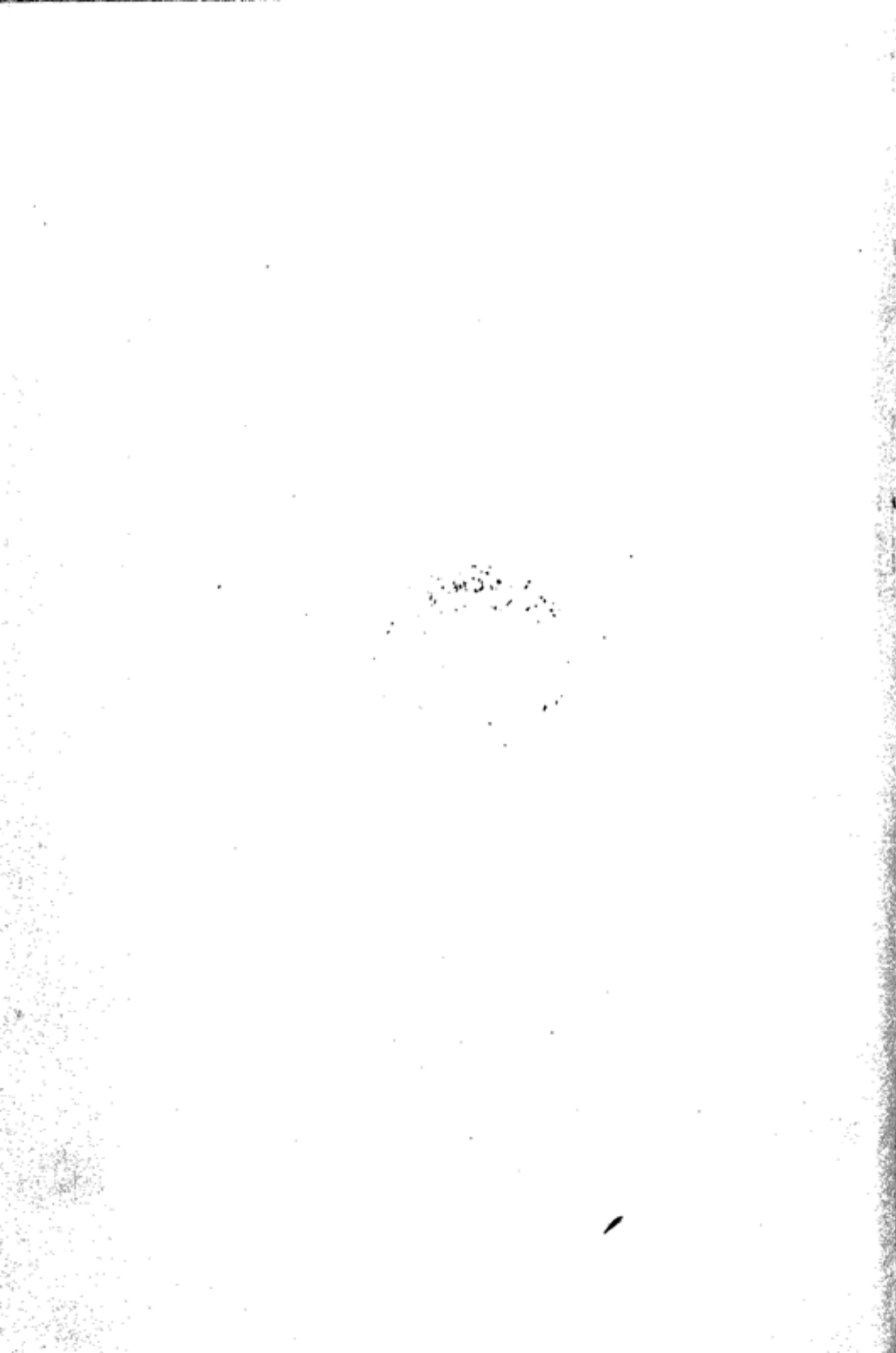
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# AFRICANISM

## THE AFRICAN PERSONALITY

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BY  
SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

FOREWORD BY  
SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN



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\* \* An Explanation of the "Afrika Seal" given in the title-page will be found at p. 213.

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## FOREWORD

By

Dr. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN  
*Vice-President of the Republic of India*

Sri Suniti Kumar Chatterji is one of the most fertile minds of our time. He has a keen sensibility, a remarkably active intelligence. He is essentially a humanist, and approaches the problems of human beings wherever they are with sympathy and affection. His book on *Africanism* is a timely one, drawing attention to the past achievements and future possibilities of the African peoples, the black ones. The few specimens of art given in this book show their style of art. The African peoples have a rich mythological tradition and a delicately balanced way of life. Their sculpture and painting, and music and dance are impressive. All life is a transition from the past into the future. If the Africans in their eagerness to raise their status and standards break their links with the past, humanity at large will to that extent be impoverished. Technologically primitive societies are not on that account uncivilised. A civilisation should be judged not merely by advances in technology but by the state of the human being and the relations among men.

The *Bhagavad-gita* asks us not to disturb, unsettle, uproot the minds of men : *na buddhi-bhedam janayet* (III, 26). The rites and practices of different communities are vital to those who believe in them. They may be intolerable to those who do not believe in them ; but to those who accept them, they are the vehicles of unspoken convictions and standards of conduct. They have for them practical value and spiritual appeal. The African

people should not be exploited by uplifters and reformers. No people do so much evil as those who go about doing good. Almost all African people believe in the Divine Creator and Dispenser of events.

The vast social and industrial changes in Africa are creating a ferment among the Africans. The Africans are not content to live in the hope of governing themselves at some distant date. They are not willing to accept servitude to others as their inevitable lot. They realise that labour is power, and, when organised, can become effective. There are in Africa today fascist police states, but they are bound to disappear.

The author believes in the oneness of humanity, despite its varied manifestations. He, like many others, aims at racial harmony. This book is a contribution to the better understanding of African peoples, their art and culture.

New Delhi,  
May 23, 1960.

## ON AFRICA

From the Speeches of  
SRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
*Prime Minister of India*

I do think that we must not forget the countries of Africa, because probably no people in the world have suffered so much, and have been exploited so much in the past as the people of Africa. (July 15, 1938.)

In many parts of Africa—East, West and South—there are considerable numbers of Indians, mostly business people. Our definite instructions to them and to our agents in Africa are that they must always put the interests of the indigenous population first. We want to have no Indian vested interests at the expense of the population of these countries. (February 6, 1950.)

I have had for a long time a strong feeling of the martyrdom of Africans, not today, but for centuries. Probably, that Continent and the people of that Continent have suffered more in many ways than any other part of the world. My deepest sympathy goes to these people, and I would like them to turn a corner which leads them to greater well-being and freedom. (June 12, 1953.)

We can never tolerate this idea of racial discrimination and inequality. (August 17, 1953.)

You should be ready to take up responsibility when you return to your country, and should retain your individuality. You should have a pride in Africa. Stand by

your people and your country. Each country has something substantial to contribute to world's culture. Africa, though an old continent, is still capable of giving a feeling of youth and vitality to its children, which are very precious for any race or individual.

Probably no part of the earth's surface had suffered more in the last two or three hundred years from the incursions of outsiders than Africa. However, it is far better to look at the present, and even more so at the future, than go back to the past all the time. (Address to African Students in India, Delhi, December 26, 1953.)

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This book is the outcome of a great love for Africa, which the author has entertained for the last 40 years and more, ever since he was impressed by certain universal and abiding qualities of African culture when he first saw in London, in 1919, some specimens of African Art from West Africa and Congo State. The black people of Africa particularly has suffered more than many other peoples of the world, and it is a happy sign that the right of this section of the Human family for self-determination and freedom is being at last admitted and implemented, although unwillingly and tardily in some cases. In their determination to free themselves from oppression and foreign domination, the African is now anxious to find his moorings—to know himself and his past history and culture, to see if that could bring to him a recovery of his nerve which he seemed to have lost. He is searching for an Ideology which is linked up with his past and which can be full of meaning and help not only for himself but also for Humanity at large ; and the author, in these pages, as a sympathetic spectator from far-away India, has sought to present his own reading and understanding of the matter, as well as his suggestions.

He has, at the end of the Five Chapters making up this book, which is introduced by Rabindranath Tagore's Poem on Africa, given a small album of specimens of African Art. These pictures do not seek to present a general survey of African Art, but they are indicative of the beauty and significance of Africa's contribution to World Art through examples which have an appeal which is obvious and immediate and which is also universal. If these specimens of African Art can give even a vague idea of the African's artistic genius and his power of



execution in the domain of Art to the average lay person in India (and outside India), the purpose of the author will be more than fulfilled.

The author has not been a professed student of Philosophy or Religion, Anthropology or Sociology, and the subject he has professed all his life has been Linguistics, and Art has been his great passion in life. As a Human Science, Linguistics is linked up with all the other Human Sciences, and naturally he was drawn to Anthropology and Culture History, Philosophy and Religion, and connected subjects of human interest. He is keenly conscious of his own deficiencies and incompetence in the matter he has sought to discuss in his book, but his amateurish observations are given out, for whatever they are worth, in a spirit of sincerity and hope for the success of Africa's cause in the comity of nations. He craves the indulgence of scholars and experts in the study of Africa's life and philosophy, her ways and religion, for many faults of omission and commission and many errors of judgment and conclusion on insufficient grounds. He believes in the entire body of Mankind forming a Single Unit, one and indivisible, in the Integration of all races and peoples in one World Citizenship, and in the Synthesis of All Cultures in One World Culture ; and he sincerely thinks that this Integration and Synthesis can never be complete without the contribution from Africa.

In that spirit, he offers this book as a Homage from India to the Spirit and Culture of the People of Black Africa—as a brotherly Handshake of the Indian Man with the Man of Africa.

“Sudharma”,  
16 Hindusthan Park,  
Calcutta-29,  
May 1, 1960.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji

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## TO AFRICA

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*( Translated by the Author from the original Bengali )*

In that early dusk of a distracted age,  
when God in scorn of his own workmanship,  
violently shook his head at his primitive efforts,  
an impatient wave snatched you away, Africa,  
from the bosom of the East,  
and kept you brooding in a dense enclosure  
of niggardly light,  
guarded by giant trees.

There you slowly stored  
the baffling mysteries of the wilderness  
in the dark cellars of your profound privacy,  
conned the signals of land and water difficult to read,  
and the secret magic of Nature invoked in your mind  
magic rites from the boundaries of consciousness.

You donned the disguise of deformity to mock the terrible,  
and in a mimicry of a sublime ferocity  
made yourself fearful to conquer fear.  
You are hidden, alas, under a black veil,  
which obscures your human dignity to the darkened  
vision of contempt.

With man-traps stole upon you those hunters  
whose fierceness was keener than the fangs of your wolves,  
whose pride was blinder than your lightless forests.  
The savage greed of the civilised stripped naked its  
unashamed inhumanity.

You wept and your cry was smothered,  
your forest trails became muddy with tears and blood,  
while the nailed boots of the robbers  
left their indelible prints  
along the history of your indignity.

And all the time across the sea,  
church-bells were ringing in their towns and villages,  
the children were lulled in mother's arms,  
and poets sang hymns to Beauty.

Today when on the western horizon  
the sun-set sky is stifled with dust-storm,  
when the beast, creeping out of its dark den  
proclaims the death of the day with ghastly howls,  
come, you poet of the fatal hour,  
stand at that ravished woman's door,  
ask for her forgiveness,  
and let that be the last great word  
in the midst of the delirium of a diseased  
Continent.

Santiniketan,  
17 March, 1937

## AFRICA

*I do not fear in Darkness, I do love the Dark.*

*When I see the Dark, I think of God, my Mother, Who is  
Black and Inscrutable like this Darkness.*

*When I see the shapes of Fear and Darkness, I call upon  
my Mother, the Black One ;*

*In the midst of the Darkness, I can see the Light of the  
rosy Feet of my Mother.\**

Africa has been called the 'Dark Continent'. Until recently, it was dark and unknown to the peoples of Europe and Asia. But now, thanks to European curiosity and Arab and European urge for expansion and exploitation, Africa, with all her hidden corners, finds herself in the full light of knowledge and familiarity. It was also called 'dark', as its people (except among the later Arab invaders, and the Hamitic peoples in the North) are characterized by their colour, which is black, in various shades, from the rich deep to the brownish, each of which has its own beauty not usually appreciated by others. And most Christian missionaries, who went to bring light to the 'Dark Continent', thought that with his 'heathen' religions and his cruel practices the mind of the African was plunged in the darkness of ignorance and superstition that Christianity alone, as these missionaries conceived it to be, could dispel. The attitude of the propagators of Islam, whether Arabs or Berbers or converted Africans, was also similar.

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\*An Indian Invocation\* to Kali ('the Black One'). Kali is God conceived as the Great Mother of the Universe, Who is both Death and Destruction as well as Life and Tenderness. (From the Bengali.)

### The Mystery of Africa

A change in our attitude towards Africa is now demanded by the new age. Africa, in the first instance, with her special flora and fauna, has preserved some types in both the plant and animal worlds that originated on the soil of Africa and are no longer found elsewhere in the world ; and this makes Africa, as a field where Nature has unveiled herself, a source of perennial interest and novelty for man outside the continent. There are the strange African trees and plants—the baobab, the oil-palm, the cola nut, the gum plants, besides some geological survivals in her plant world. The African elephant and rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the giraffe, the zebra, the okapi, the quagga, the gnu, and other animals and there, with the African lion, and the great man-like apes, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee. Then there is the true African Man : his physical and mental character—black skin suffused with strength and vigour, simplicity, good humour, and cheerfulness, and closeness to Nature, with a spirit of reverence for the God that is behind Nature — is something which makes him quite distinctive in the World of Man, and eminently likable, and even lovable, to those who come to know him from close quarters.

The 'Negro,' or the Black Man of Africa, is one of the three main or basic types of Humanity — the other two being the White or Caucasoid Man (including also the Brown) and the Yellow or the Mongoloid Man (including the Red Man of America, who forms just a branching off of the Yellow Man). And a black strain is supposed to have formed a potent leaven in the evolution of the White Man, too, during the dawn of Man's advent on earth.

In our country, India, as anthropologists have found, the African Negroid came in pre-historic times, and settled over some parts of the country. Later on they were either absorbed by other races who followed them, or were

exterminated ; and in some cases they are supposed to have survived to our day in small tribes — in South India, and in the Andaman Islands. Belonging as they did to the eolithic and food-gathering stage, they did not have any civilization which could survive. But it is believed that some of their religious notions and practices may be found as a substratum in the cults and religious ideas of the subsequent peoples who established themselves in India, and had contacts with these Negroids from Africa who preceded them in the country.

#### Africa and the World

*Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*, 'always something new from Africa' — as the Romans said in wonder 2,000 years ago, when, along with the other peoples of classical antiquity, they were attracted by the greatness and the vastness, the antiquity as well as the strangeness of Africa. Egypt was a part of Africa, and to the south of Egypt lay Nubia, and the Black Hinterland as yet unknown to the Asian and European peoples of antiquity, although the Carthaginian Hanno explored the West African coasts along the Atlantic down to Guinea about 600 B. C. and although, it is said, that Phoenician explorers, sent by the Egyptian Pharaoh Necho, circumnavigated the whole of the African continent from the Red Sea and the eastern coast, returning to Egypt by way of the Strait of Gibraltar and North Africa, in the 7th century B. C.

Africa and her Negro or Black people have been more exploited by Europeans and some Asians than any other area and any other people in the world. Yet through this very exploitation ( and it was generally a ruthless exploitation, which has shown the White Man, both European and West Asian, to be far more of a savage than the Black Man himself ), Africa has been enabled to serve humanity in some indirect ways : through her Physical Labour, as slaves



taken over to the New World and elsewhere, in promoting the wealth of the New World and of other lands ; through her Art, in bringing new elements to Music and the Dance in their international setting in the present day ; and latterly, by direct contact, to the Arts of Sculpture and Painting, and even to Literature, of the modern world ; and finally, through the innate simplicity and often a charming primitive Quality of her Life, not cut off from a contact with the hidden world which is behind life and from an *abandon* of faith in a Godhead that can be vaguely or intensely sensed.

#### Submerged Talents

The Black People of Africa have so far been denied the opportunity to discover themselves and to rise to their fullest height. Africa's influence on the World, in spite of everything, has been so far mainly through her enslaved population in America. Yet in her Art — specially in the remarkable traditions of her Sculpture associated with her primitive animistic faith — Sculpture in wood, in ivory, in stone, and in bronze, and modelling in clay, which had such an astonishing development among the true African peoples in West Africa and in the Heart of the Continent, and in her prehistoric Paintings in rocks and caves, both in the North and in the South ; and also in her simple clay Architecture that has evinced quite a noble style and a beauty of line presenting a new thing in the world even at the present day — an Architecture that she has developed during recent centuries in the Niger Basin of the continent — she is beginning to be appreciated in her potentiality.

The African has been the neglected and ill-treated child of the human family. There are still some who want to keep him segregated in his slavery and his poverty and his ignorance, so that they might exploit him like a beast of

burden and yet try to have an easy conscience. The harmony and mutual co-operation in African domestic and communal life ( with the industry, loyalty, and simple old-world grace of the African Woman forming the basis of domestic life ) have also not been understood ; and the disagreement with other standards and *milieus* of life has been responsible for a wholesale condemnation of African life ( and of African religion also ) as being among the 'beastly devices of the heathen'.

In Africa, it is true that there used to be human sacrifice among certain tribes as part of their religious cult. But this was not peculiar to Africa alone — most civilized peoples of the world, some time or other, including the ancestors of the present-day Europeans, practised human sacrifice. But the human sacrifice demanded by a primitive cult among a backward people was far less heinous than the human sacrifice in the name of religion that civilized and Christian Europe used to indulge in — e.g. the Roman Catholic Inquisition with its *autos da fe*, or 'acts of faith', and witch-burnings in most Christian lands of medieval and early modern Europe, by which thousands of people, whose only offence was that they did not subscribe to the dogmas of a particular church, or who were superstitiously accused of a knowledge and practice of black magic and doing harm to people with that magic, were burnt alive in slow fires, throughout some of the most enlightened centuries in the history of mankind. Those who condemned Africa outright for her alleged barbarities and savageries, in religion and in life, were like the man of whom Jesus spoke as being too conscious of the mote in his brother's eye while forgetting the beam in his own.

But the Time-Spirit is at last working, and one of the most significant things in the history of man at the present age is that the African Man is also rousing himself from the sleep and stupor of ages, and is realizing that he also must

take his proper place in the comity of races and peoples. He has taken his lesson from his contact with the peoples of the West, among whom, it must be said for the sake of truth, and with due gratefulness, the African Man found some of his truest friends and well-wishers, although the rank and file went to rob and exploit him and vilify him. Freed from the restraints imposed upon him by centuries of oppression, exploitation, misunderstanding and vilification, the African Man will finally be in a position to contribute to the enrichment of human achievement, and he will be able to do something for bringing, according to the gifts with which Nature has endowed him, happiness and joy to mankind. No one knows what Nature, or Destiny, or God, has in store for us. Who in civilized Greece or Rome of 2,500 or 2,000 years ago would have thought about or could have believed in the future possibilities of the skin-clad and woad-coated barbarians of Central and Northern Europe, who offered human sacrifices to their gods, as the enlightened Germanic, Celtic, and Slav peoples of today, who are giving the lead to present-day civilization?

#### Restoration of Self-Respect

The Symphony through a Harmony of Contrasts in Human Civilization will not be complete before the African Man can come and join it. This Symphony has remained incomplete in many ways, through numerous peoples of promise and even of remarkable achievement not being able to give of their best to the variety and richness of human civilization and man's self-expression. Thus, we have the various peoples of the two Americas, some of whom were almost at par with the civilized peoples of antiquity in the Old World :— for example, various Nahua peoples of Mexico (Toltecs, Aztecs, and others), the Mixtecs and the Zapotecs, the Otomis and others of

Mexico, and the Mayas of Mexico and Guatemala ; the Chibchas of Colombia ; and the Quechuas and Aymaras of the Andean regions in South America ; besides the Polynesians — to mention two groups of peoples, in the New World and in Oceania, who are 'heirs of an unfulfilled renown'. Their mental qualities, if allowed to have full development, would have supplied some new facets to human civilization as a whole. Most of these peoples are now either extinct or have become effete, or have lost their characteristics through miscegenation. But the African still survives, and he is very much alive ; and if he is to make his own special contribution to this Symphony of Cultures, he must have a restored sense of self-respect, of faith in himself, and in his past achievements. And his past achievements have not been of a mean order.

Before our mind's eye passes the panorama of the Empires that the African man had built, with civilization of a type that was quite in consonance with his economic and cultural surroundings : the empire of Ghana beside the Senegal and Niger rivers ; the Mandingo or Mali empire which succeeded that of Ghana ; the Songhoi, Mossi, and other kingdoms in the Niger countries ; the ancient pre-Christian and pre-Muslim culture of Western Africa that found expression in the astonishing art products of this area ; the empire of the Mali in the 14th and 15th centuries — the high culture they built, and the literature in Arabic they produced in the Muslim States of the Niger valley ; old African towns like Kumbi, Jenne, Timbuctoo, Gao, Kano, and the various cities of West Coast, Benin and the rest ; the achievements of the early Bantu peoples of Eastern Africa, the empires ( like the Monomotapa empire of the 17th century, and the earlier States ) they built, and the wonderful old cities like Zimbabwe they constructed, the ruins of which still excite our wonder ; and above all, the great Art of the West African and of the Bantu peoples,

an art in which bronze-casting in a realistic way rivals the best work produced by Ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy, apart from the symbolic art of African wood sculpture and masks that was connected with the native African religion.

There is also the African Dance, and African Music — the drums, the xylophone, and the harp, and the human voice. All these are true heritages for the African, and there ought to be a revival of a proper sense of values about them; and then alone can the African strive to continue being himself, and at the same time achieve greatness before his fellow human beings. The glory of a simple and happy existence with song and dance, which surrounds like a radiant halo the unbounded energy and industry of the African, should also be made to live and to suffuse with light African life as one of its priceless heritages. In this way only can Africa be of service not only to herself, but also to humanity at large.

#### Need for Atonement

And that part of humanity which has sinned against the African should, in its attitude to the present-day African, atone for what it has done, at least partially, and should have the mind to ask for Africa's forgiveness for all wrongs done in the past, by stopping or restraining the perpetration of the old injustices and cruelties by people who are still determined to continue them.

Where the Africans did not have the misfortune to have all their endeavours and even the normal trend of their life dominated and thwarted by European and other colonists established among them, as in West Africa (where also a number of sympathetic and far-seeing European officials, educationists, and others have helped them), they have not surrendered their soul entirely. But where colonialism and attendant exploitation and colour prejudice with its

soul-killing pressure on African life are going strong, the African is finding it well-nigh impossible to rehabilitate himself in his own country, and to progress and transform himself in his own line of development.

With the preliminary understanding of their racial and cultural bases and values, may the Leaders of the African Peoples realize what is necessary for them : to hold fast to the things of permanent value in their own culture in so far as these have been beneficial for them by conducing to the good life ; to have faith in themselves, and in their destiny ; to hope to make good in the Present and the Future what they lacked in the Past ; to study and accept to the fullest from all other cultures, of Europe, of Asia, and of America, whatever would be of benefit to them in their material development, and in their mental and spiritual unfoldment ; and to bring to a higher level of achievement all that they were enabled to perform in the centuries gone by.

May the desperate cry of the suppressed African, as of all other suppressed humanity, be no longer just 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' ; but may it be transformed into an aspiration and a hopeful prayer : 'Thou showest Thyself in the World : do Thou show Thyself unto me ; from the unreal, lead me to the Real ; from darkness, lead me to Light ; from death, lead me to Life.' And may the dispensation of the Divine Being, Who has revealed Himself to Mankind under as many names as there are languages, and who is the God not of this or that group which relegates all God's favour to itself, but is the God of All Mankind, irrespective of colour or creed, help the African to attain to this.

## THE AFRICAN PERSONALITY : AFRICANISM

Culture : A Way of Thought and a Way of Life

Culture ordinarily means the finer fruits of a civilisation, and it is usually taken to mean all that a people has built up with a view to make life worth living, after civilization in the broad sense of the term has made life easy and comfortable. All that by which the mind and the spirit are nourished and enraptured and elevated is Culture. A people's art and literature—its response to the world, seen as well as unseen—through its expression in verbal composition (which embraces its best creations in prose or verse or drama, i. e., its literature) ; through its plastic arts, in architecture, sculpture, painting, and the various artistic crafts ; through its music, both vocal and instrumental, and its dance and its drama—forms the outward and in some cases a palpable repository of its culture. But even beyond this, there is something which is subtle and which cannot be visualized, and this finds an expression through a people's Way of Thought, and also its Way of Life. These are also linked up with literature as well as the fine arts ; and in their totality, this Way of Thought and Way of Life may be brought under what is said in the German language to be a people's *Weltanschauung*—its Attitude towards Life, seen and unseen. In ancient India, in one of the late Vedic texts, the Fine Arts have been described as something which form a reflex of the Divine Art, or the Divine Beauty that is behind life. The arts bring about the culture or exaltation and improvement of the soul ; culture is that by which an individual, like one who offers sacrifice to the Gods, perfects himself or

his soul (*silpani samsanti deva-silpani ; atma-samskrtir vava silpani.....etair yajamana atmanam samskurute*).

It would be quite easy to see that as man is tremendously under the influence of his physical environments and his racial and historical bearings, civilizations and culture-types must also be determined differently in different climes and ages. It is indeed a far cry from the civilization of China to that of France, or from that of India to that of America. There is of course our basic Humanity, and since Mankind is one, in spite of local diversities Human Culture is also one. But the manifestation or the outward expression of this Basic Unity in Human Culture is manifold. Civilized man now takes his stand on this Basic Unity of Mankind, and it does not, at least in the present age of enlightenment, consider it proper or human to segregate different groups of mankind from each other. Integration of Humanity within one single circle or unit is one of the new discoveries of mankind—present-day man is gradually coming to this position as something which is inevitable and inescapable; and although in many parts of the world this ideal of integration of the diverse elements of a single entity that is Man was arrived at by sages and seers and religious leaders, this has to be discovered and put into practice anew from generation to generation and from country to country, considering that certain forces which are mostly man-made are operating against this basic idea.

Another matter may be mentioned at the outset. Culture can be taken to present three stages, strata or strands—Individual, Communal, and Universal or International. A man's personal life, his morality, his intellect, his emotions, his reactions to the seen and unseen Reality, and his outward behaviour are matters of his individual Culture. The sum-total or the Greatest Common Measure of these individual factors in Culture give us the Communal,



and by extension the National Culture. This National Culture is conditioned by climate, economy and history as well as the racial bases. Finally, an integrated Human Culture comes up as the bigger circle, enveloping National or Regional cultures by its Common Humanity, and presenting a Great Way of Thought and a Way of Life or Behaviour, which holds good for all mankind and towards which Civilization is moving, and, further, which is not exclusive but is all-inclusive, having room for all ways of life and all ideologies, so long as they do not transgress the rights of others. In this way, the Personality of the African Man, the African Way of Life and the broader Africanism, is comprehended within an all-embracing Humanism.

#### Culture and Universal Humanity

In studying the culture of a particular people, a correct understanding and appreciation of it can be ensured only when we divest ourselves of a superiority complex with regard to that particular people. Certain notions, which can only be described as primitive in a civilized age, must be entirely removed from our approach. One of these is the assumption that a particular race or people is either inherently noble or great or good, or is inherently ignoble or mean or low. With God there cannot be any chosen people—whether belonging to a particular race or caste or group, the Nordic or the Yamato, the Brahman or the Englishman, the Muslim or the Roman Catholic. Mankind is one, and given an opportunity, any particular race can make and has made its great contributions to the sum-total of human culture. Of course, in human history there have been some peoples to whom it has been given to serve Humanity in many ways, in bringing before the comity of nations its great contributions in Arts and Letters, in Thought and Realization, in Crafts and Devices, in great doings and great achievements, which have a

meaning for the entire human race. But there have been also other peoples who were denied this opportunity by Nature or by the Force of Events, and they are only waiting for bringing out the best that is in them and in this way coming to obtain the gratitude of Humanity. They are equally great nations in *posse*, though not in *esse*. As the great English Poet has said: 'They also serve who stand and wait'. It is the possibility for great effort and achievement which we have got to recognise in Man every-where. Who would have thought in Athens in the 5th century B. C. or in Rome in the 1st century A. D. that the Northern Barbarians of Europe—the Germans, the Celts and the Slavs—would at one time be in the vanguard of human civilization, and that too within the next 1500 to 2000 years? The peoples of Africa, particularly Black Africa, are to-day under a cloud. But the rays of the Sun are now piercing through this cloud, and Africa finally is in the throes of a resurgence; and Africa revived will be a store of new endeavour and new achievement, in which the whole of mankind may ultimately rejoice.

The Two Africas: White Africa of the North, and  
Black Africa South of the Sahara

Africa, as it has been acknowledged by all, has been the disowned child of the human family, for whom no one seemed to have a good word or a kindly thought. Now, through the persistent exploitation and vilification and cruel treatment of large portions of African population for centuries by more advanced peoples, and through their recent realization of the helpless state in which they have been brought, the determination of Africans to take their stand on their dignity as human beings who are to shape their own destinies,—through these two factors, the conscience of all right-thinking people outside Africa is

being roused ; and it is now becoming more and more felt that Africa should at last get a square deal.

Like other parts of the world, Africa shows diversity within the unity of her geography as a single area cut off from Asia and Europe, although Africa through her contiguity with Asia looks more like an extension of the former than a completely isolated area. The diversity of Africa is mainly with regard to the peoples who inhabit her, and this diversity virtually results in the existence of two Africas—the advanced and organized ancient Numidian, Libyan and Egyptian Africa of the North, which has been succeeded by the Arab-Berber Islamic Africa to the North of the Sahara ; and the real Africa of the Centre and the South—the *Black Africa* to the South of the Sahara, extending roughly from the 15th and the 10th degrees of latitude (in West Africa and East Africa respectively) from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, excluding of course the land of the Abyssinians and of the Somalis.

We have thus two Africas, the Africa of peoples who are of Caucasian origin like the Hamites of ancient Egypt and the Berbers and Tuaregs of Northern Africa and the Sahara area, and the Kushites to the South-East of Egypt, who have now come under the dominance of Arabic Islam ; and there is the Black Africa of Sudanese or “True Negroes” of Western and Central Africa, and the Bantu Negroes of the entire South African Peninsula.

The Black African peoples, who can be described as the true Africans, are generally known to the European World as *Negroes* ( French *Nègre*, German *Neger*), which simply means “Black” ( Latin *Niger* is the original word ). But *Negro* has acquired a sense of contempt, and the English corruption of the word, viz. *Nigger*, is a term of abuse. Hence the peoples of Black Africa rightly resent the term *Negro*, and are quite content to call themselves just *Africans*, and would not object to the word *Black* if

applied to them : they are now quite proud of their colour, in fact. A learned name, which may ultimately be adopted for Black Africa, or African Africa, has been used by some French and other European scholars like Denise Paulme, viz. *Melano-African* ( or, rather, *Melan-African*), combining the Greek word for 'dark' or 'black', *melas*, *melanos* ( cognate with our Sanskrit *mala*, *malina* ) with the name *Africa*. This new term has no stigma or contempt, as it is a learned and scientific term ; and as a single word *Melan-africa*, it has everything to recommend it before the phrasal expression *Black Africa*. This will be quite a precise and neutral expression, like a similar composite word *Amerindian* ( *America* & *Indian* ) to indicate the pre-Columbian peoples of the New World, who are commonly called *Red Indians* ( or sometimes merely *Indians* ) in Canada and U. S. A., and *Indios* in Latin America ; and as these old names are ambiguous and misleading, we can also note in this connexion some other new words which have been made necessary by the modern age with its international and inter-continental contexts, like *Eurasia* and *Eurasian*, and *Afro-Asia* and *Afrasian*.

There are two other groups who are found within Black Africa. But they now are too insignificant numerically and culturally. Thus, we have the Bushmen and the Hottentots of South Africa, and the Pygmies of Central Africa. We have got to take them within the orbit of *Melanafrica*.

With regard to the peoples of Semito-Hamitic Africa or White Africa of the North, there is no reason for any concern. These peoples are fully advanced and are quite self-conscious, and have built up great civilizations, starting from that of Ancient Egypt, right down to the Islamic culture of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Northern Africa really is a projection of Western Asia,

culturally and spiritually, if not wholly in race. This White Africa of the North has never been in the same desperate situation as Black Africa of the Centre and the South. The cultural bases of Semito-Hamitic Africa have been investigated and properly formulated from very ancient times.

Black Africa, on the other hand, is a world apart ; and although Black Africa may have a share in certain deeper conceptions and ideologies which belong to a pre-Hamitic and certainly pre-Semitic stratum among the people of what is now White Africa of the North, its own development has been along a characterized line, and this has given to Black Africa its own unique Personality.

#### Neglect of Black Africa : Victim of Injustice & Exploitation

The leaders of Black Africa are now sensing this "African Personality", and they are trying to re-discover it, to visualize it, to formulate it, and to realize it, and to establish and extend it in their resurgent life. It must be understood that this African Personality is the Personality of Black Africa only ; and this is awaiting to be discovered, studied and understood in its proper bearings, by both Africans and non-Africans.

When we are considering the needs of mankind in a particular area, we have got to pay greater attention to that group ( or those groups ) about which we have been neglectful. Consequently, in our appraisal of Africa, it is necessary in the interest of Humanity to think specially of Black Africa—not so much of White Arab-Berber Africa, which has acquired already its own assured place of honour in the assemblage of present-day civilized peoples. The three *main* types into which Mankind or the Human Race has conveniently been divided are the *Caucasians*, who range from pure white to brown and dark (even black) in complexion (*"white in colour, but brown or*

*black in complexion*"), but are characterized by certain peculiarities in the make-up of their physiognomy and in the nature of their hair, although they may be differing more or less (though within the type) in head and nose formation, and other matters; the *Mongoloids*, characterized by yellow or yellow-white or copper or brownish pigmentation of the skin, narrow oblique eyes, and certain noteworthy formation of the head, and hair; and finally, the *Negro* type, whose skin complexion is found in various shades of black (from chocolate or brownish to reddish or bluish black), and which has got a certain very well-defined form of the head and face, and is characterized by woolly hair. Since mankind is one, and these three basic types, which have been conceived in a loose way, have freely mixed and interbred with each other and have given rise to any number of mixed or intermediate types, it would not be easy to formulate the basic mentality, characteristics or attitudes for each of these three types of man. But nevertheless, attempts have been made in this direction by both anthropologists and ethnologists and by lay people, which have not of course been wholly convincing but which nevertheless give some broad indications. The White or Brown or Dark Caucasian Man, the Yellow or Red Mongol Man, and the Black Negro or Melanafrican (or African) Man—these three stand out as the three 'basic *varnas*, i. e. "colours" or groups of Humanity—to use the ancient Sanskrit term, which from the colour of their skin originally came to signify men's social or cultural, or racial or professional groups or "castes".

It is Black Africa which has been maltreated and ruthlessly exploited by the White peoples, of Europe and of Africa itself, and which is now crying for her rights. It is Black Africa which is striving to break the chains that have held her in slavery, both physical and spiritual.

It is Black Africa which is now trying to find herself, to know herself and to be established in the concourse of peoples in her own dignity and glory, and is demanding from the other sections of the Family of Man the respect that is due to her because of her distinctive identity and her personality.

Black Africa, or Melanfrica—a Culture World by Itself :  
Exploitation and Misrepresentation

After the opening up of the continent in the West, South and the East by the maritime peoples of Western Europe, Africa came to the forefront in a new way. In the ancient and mediaeval world, contacts with Africa took place mainly from the North, through Egypt and through the Berber lands to the West of Egypt, by way of Sudan and the Sahara. The Southern Semites from Sabaea in South Arabia also penetrated into what is now Abyssinia, and established their South Arabian Semitic speech (Old Ethiopian and its modern forms) there. It has been suggested that from far-away India also there were business connexions between that country and East Africa, and it is also said that the sources of the Nile were known to the people of India at a very early epoch. Africa always presented something new to the Mediterranean world—particularly Africa of the Centre and the deep South : *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi* : 'always something new from Africa', as the Romans used to say. The ancient Egyptians had close dealings with Black Africa immediately to their South and South-West. Africans are depicted in ancient Egyptian art, and a knowledge of the Black African passed from Egypt into classical Europe—into Greece and Rome.

The development of a high type of African culture we find from excavations in a Roman-Nubian site in Nubia (conducted by Sir Leonard Woolley and Dr. Randall

MacIver), giving us in some cases interesting pictographic representations of African life (engraved on two bronze bowls dating from the third century A. D., as preserved now in the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, U. S. A.) from Black African lands beyond the southern frontiers of Egypt—from Karanog (between Aswan and Wadi Halfa), where we find drawings of pastoral scenes with cattle and herdsmen milking and storing milk before an African queen sitting in front of her characteristic *kraal*-like dwelling, with an attending woman and a girl behind her. These give us a very unique representation of Black African life some 1800 years ago. There are also plentiful artistic evidences of a native African culture going back to pre-historic times—to some five centuries before the Christian era, in certain areas in West Africa (as in the discoveries of beautiful terracotta figures from Nok in Western Nigeria made by Bernard Fagg and described by William Fagg, and certain artifacts belonging only to a few centuries later discovered by Jean Paul Lebeuf at Chari-Lagone near the Chad lake). It is becoming clear that Black Africa had built up a great native tradition of art at least 2500 years ago. There was till very recently a desire to derive everything of significance in the life and art of Africa from foreigners—from Egyptians of ancient times, from the Greeks, the Romans, the Berbers, and latterly the Arabs and the Europeans. Now it would appear we are getting a proper perspective, and the native creative genius of Black Africa is gradually being admitted. When the Europeans met the African in the coast-lands of West Africa, from the last quarter of the 15th century, they found ample evidence of a very well-ordered and quite an advanced and even civilized life, with arts and crafts and music and dancing and the innate beauty and dignity of man in the happiness of domestic life which had made it quite attractive and even romantic to



them—these Europeans were fascinated to some extent by the “barbaric” splendour they saw in West Africa, and later in some parts of East Africa as well. Black Africa had by that time—at least in Upper Niger Valley—come in close touch with the culture-world of Arabic Islam as it had developed in the Maghreb—in North Africa to the West of Egypt, among both Arabs and Berbers. But the Portuguese, and following them the other Europeans who arrived in these parts of Africa, came with a superiority complex as White Men and as Christians ; and their unquestioned superiority in science, in navigation, in their spirit of adventure, and in fighting with their fire-arms, and the fact that the Africans in the coast-lands did not build up any great architecture which could overawe them (the African Kings and Rulers and Chiefs living only in thatched mud hutments, although they had characteristic decorations of their own), and that they had no written literature in their own languages, and were deficient in many of the outer paraphernalia of an advanced civilization, made the White Men from Europe think contemptuously about the Black Men of Africa. They came to make money and to relieve the African of his possessions of gold and ivory and various products of nature which had made Africa self-contained and even prosperous ; and their religious men came with a fanatical zeal to save the heathen and benighted African by converting them to Christianity, and making them satellites of Europe. Lacking as they did in a knowledge of the outside world, naturally the African found himself at a great disadvantage. He had forgotten a great deal of his own history, excepting up in the North round about the great bend of the river Niger. There, thanks to his contact with the world of Arabic scholarship, the local African, who was fairly early converted to or influenced by Islam, retained a good deal of the memory of the past empires and their great glory which

easily carried his people back to a period 1500 to 1800 years from now—the memory of the empires of Ghana, of the Mali, and of the Songhoi. In West African coastlands also, the various African nations or tribes had built up organized social life and political states, and retained a good deal of their traditional history and culture. In Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, the Bantus, the other great branch of the Negro or Black African race, had also developed a characteristic culture, and they had built up in Rhodesia great stone-walled cities like Zimbabwe, and had established quite well-organized political 'states, the greatest of which was that of Monomotapa in East Africa, in the 17th century. The contacts of the Europeans with the Africans, particularly in South Africa, were on the whole exceedingly harmful, and in some contexts disastrous for the Africans. Arab and Berber slavers, and the Portuguese, Spanish, English, Dutch and French slave-traders both combined to bring untold miseries for centuries to the Black African peoples in Central and Eastern Africa and in West Africa. They used to undertake slaving raids on their own, as in the case of the Arabs and Berbers, or they used as in the case of the Europeans in West Africa to buy slaves from African rulers, making it profitable for some African kings to undertake slaving raids to capture and sell people of their own blood to the merciless foreigners, for exile and exploitation in far-away America and other places. All that is now a thing of the past; and we must in this connexion pay our great tribute of respect to the high-souled lovers of men and defenders of human rights in England and France and America who started from the 18th century the campaign against slave-trade and slave-owning, which ultimately put an end to this great blot on human civilization.

Lest we forget the horrors of the slave-trade and the inhuman conditions of the slave-traffic by ship from Africa

to America, *Life*, the American journal, in support of the sincere move for the integration of the American Negro with White America in the United States, has given a series of most convincing graphic representations in full colour of the generally peaceful and happy conditions of West African life before the shadow of the slave-trade fell upon it, of the brutal ways of the slavers with their merchandise of human flesh both by land and sea, of White arrogance and barbarism in civilized America in dealing with the slaves, and of the symptoms of hope for the future, with faith in God and love of man for which there are abundant evidences. All sympathizers with the African in his sufferings and all supporters of human rights will thank the *Life Magazine* for acting as the conscience of America through these numbers (1956, September 3, and September 10).

With their country and their people always at the mercy of unscrupulous marauders by both land and sea—the Europeans by sea and the peoples of North Africa by land, with heartless exploitation taking fullest advantage of their innocence and ignorance and their primitive social and economic organizations, with arrogant missionaries of alien religious branding them from the very outset as people suffering under a curse from God only because they followed the ways of their fore-fathers, they were ill-treated and abused in all possible ways. They were perpetually being told that they had no past and could hope for no future either, and that it was their destiny only to live on the crumbs from the tables of superior peoples who came both by land from the North and by sea from Europe, who were exploiting them and were trying to save their souls at the same time ; and further they were denied all opportunities economic and otherwise which might help them to draw out the best in themselves and from their environment. It is therefore no wonder that the African

would lose heart and would accept, for the last few hundred years, the evaluation made by these ruthless exploiters from outside about themselves and their life and society and culture. It is true that Africa has been opened up to trade and latterly to industrialization, but for whose benefit has all this been done? The Africans have remained the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and not much more; and even worse than that in some places.

#### Gradual Regaining of Self-Confidence in Place of Loss of Nerve by Black Africa

But a situation like that could not continue for ever, as things are always in a state of flux. Out of evil cometh good; and their contact with foreigners also brought to the Africans a great many new ideas, new ways of life, and new types of organization. And it must also be said that among these foreigners there were also some who were inspired by the best traditions of European culture and European humanism. A number of White Men and Women, particularly some Missionaries and Administrators, sincerely stood to try to help the African, and not merely to exploit him. It was necessary to give the African some education, even though he was to remain in a subordinate position all his life; and it was particularly the British who opened up the doors of European or modern knowledge to the Africans. For the last two generations at least, the Africans were coming in contact with the wider world of modern civilization through contact with England and France. And as intelligent human beings, members of the great family of *Homo Sapiens*, the Africans took note of their surroundings, and began to feel uneasy in the state in which they found themselves, and they began to look wistfully to improve their condition in their own country. There was the great example of other peoples, who would be called more advanced when compared with the African,

but who were also trying to shake off the shackles of colonial and imperialistic domination—the Indians, the Burmese, the Indo-Chinese, the Indonesians, and the Ceylonese, who were ruled over by European powers like the British, the French and the Dutch : and the Chinese, who were dominated and bullied by most of the European nations and by America, on the continent of Asia. There was also the restlessness of the Arab and Berber peoples of North Africa including Egypt to be completely free. There was in addition the inspiring example of at least one independent Black African State in West Africa, the Republic of Liberia. British and French, and Belgian and Portuguese colonialism, and Boer (Dutch Afrikaner) and other white policy of suppressing the native Africans and other coloured peoples in South Africa leading ultimately to the savage application of *Apartheid* (as the result of ignorance and fear), were putting iron into the souls of Africans and making them eager to stand up and fight for their freedom and their human rights. In this matter the British, as one of the most sensible people in the present-day world, understood when to give up a losing game ; and they took the first move in Africa, like what they found wise to do in Asia. Ghana was made free in 1958, and Nigeria has been promised her freedom in 1960. The French are also seeking to take a lesson from the English though in a rather half-hearted and dilatory manner—their institution of the *French Community* has the appearance of something to set off the new *Commonwealth* as established by the British. The obnoxious word *Empire* has now been abandoned by both the British and the French.

The African has now become politically conscious ; and although education has not made much progress and although the conditions of life are still very primitive and undeveloped, the African has come to realize that all that

is largely the result of decades and centuries of foreign domination which prevented the people from coming to their own. But political consciousness—the desire to improve their lot as helots by becoming free to run their own affairs, has the constructive aspect of establishing their *Personality* also—of finding and resurrecting their soul, so to say. Herein the African has taken his initiative, although, as in other countries, certain external contacts and disinterested evaluations by right-thinking persons from outside have been of very great help in restoring to the Africans their nerve. They had lost their nerve through foreign domination and foreign contempt, and foreign indoctrination (both diabolically deliberate and callously thoughtless) as to an inherent inferiority of the Africans as a race.

The Vitality of African Life and Culture :

Attempts to rediscover the 'African Personality' .

That the Black African could have any kind of culture was an idea which was totally inadmissible by the white peoples of the modern age, particularly when organized seizure of African territory and ruthless exploitation of the African peoples started with the "Opening up of Africa", from the second half of the last century. Not only the white peoples of Europe and America, and of course the white settlers and sojourners in Africa itself, believed in the inherent barbarism, even savagery, of the African, but through propaganda a similar notion was also instilled in the minds of the people of Asia as well ; and in Asia, where the people are really sympathetic for his aspirations and his endeavour for freedom, the Black African is still under some handicap, as thoughtless people find it difficult to divest their minds from notions of a primitive backwardness of the African which have been rubbed in them for decades. Nevertheless, it is now being conceded that

the African did not come empty-handed to the gathering of peoples, and he has brought notable gifts to Humanity. As said before, for this we have to thank some of the Artists and Anthropologists and Sociologists and some Archæologists and Historians of Europe : Artists, to whom the basic qualities of African plastic art and of African life at its most natural and its best had its unique appeal ; Anthropologists and Sociologists, who began to study African life and African society in a detached manner, as any other human phenomenon, which presented unique parallels with the life of other peoples, even the most civilized, in their primitive bases ; and Historians and Archæologists, who rediscovered the achievements of the African Man and the antiquity of his culture, and are seeking to establish it all in its proper background of World History and World Culture. In this way the African is gradually coming to be rehabilitated ; and his place in the Human Family, namely, that of an honoured member of it and not of a miserable waif and beggar, has come to be recognized.

In this connexion, I am reminded of an observation made by an eminent Anthropologist from America, who came to study the religion of the Yorubas at Ife in West Nigeria, Dr. William R. Bascom, Professor of Anthropology in the North-Western University, Evanston, Illinois, U. S. A. From one of his articles I had made a quotation where he expressed his belief that the Old African Culture was fully competent to survive in the modern world, and had already demonstrated its vitality not only in Africa itself but also, under most adverse conditions, in the New World. Professor Bascom had written to me in a letter to the effect that the Anthropologist who had taken upon himself the study of a primitive people perforce became an appreciator and a defender of their Way of Life, since he understood or discovered

the *rationale* of this Way, and as a scientist he could not be the champion of an organized and a dogmatic religion, missionaries of which are usually blind to the *raison d'être* of things which are outside their purview.

What I had quoted from Dr. Bascom in 1955 is still worth quoting again. In the quarterly journal *Nigeria* (published by the Nigerian Government from Lagos and by the Crown Agents for the Colonies from London), No. 37, 1951, in an article on "the Yorubus in Cuba" Dr. Bascom wrote :

A recent issue of the *University Herald* of Ibadan contains an essay which was awarded a prize in the Nigerian Festival of Arts, 1950. Its author, Mabel Imoukhuede, asks the question : "Can the Old African Culture survive in a modern World ?" and gives "No" as her answer. Instead, in the light of the lesson of the New World, the answer must be an emphatic "Yes !" The Old African Culture not only can, but actually has survived in large Western cities as Modern Havana, inspite of obstacles which do not have to be faced in Nigeria. The Cuban Negroes were forcibly taken against their will to a new continent with different geographical conditions. They spent many years under the unfavourable conditions of slavery ; and they have been completely isolated from Africa. This lesson from the New World has important implications which should be seriously considered by those whose plans and politics for the peoples of Africa based on in the assumption that African Culture is inevitably doomed to disappear (P. 20).

In a remarkable book published in 1954 from Paris, *Dieux d'Afrique* ("Gods of Africa") by Pierre Verger (with 100 photographs by the Author and Prefaces by Theodore Monod and Roger Bastide), it is equally



heartening to find how the West African religion has survived among the Africans taken away as slaves to Brazil, and to find the deeper qualities of the African religion on the mystic side still flourishing there, though under the camouflage of a popular Roman Catholicism.

The Vitality of African Culture : a Recent Testimony  
from Two Eminent Anthropologists

I have quoted above from Professor William R. Bascom his considered opinion published in 1951 on the inner strength and vitality of African culture. In the same context I quote a recent pronouncement of the same student of African culture and Professor Melville J. Herskovits, who express the following views in a joint article, "The Problem of Stability and Change in African Culture", forming the introductory essay to a series of fifteen papers collected in a significant and timely monograph entitled *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*, as published from the University of Chicago Press, 1959 :

Despite the intensity of Christian missionary effort and the thousand years of Moslem proselytizing which have marked the history of various parts of Africa, African religions continue to manifest vitality everywhere. This is to be seen in the worship of African deities, the homage to the ancestors, and the recourse to divination, magic, and other rituals. A growing number of Africans, to be sure, have been taught to regard the religion of their forefathers as superstition and to reject other beliefs and customs as outmoded. But there is no evidence which supports the assumption that so often underlies thinking about Africa's future, that African culture, whether in its religious or other aspects, will shortly and inevitably disappear.

If the studies of the New World Negro, in which we have also been engaged, contribute anything to the

understanding of Africa, it is that African culture can and in fact has been able to accommodate itself to Euroamerican civilization. On the basis of our knowledge of Africans and their descendants in the New World, we have little reason to believe that African culture will have any difficulty in persisting with more than reinterpreted modifications. Despite the harsh conditions of acculturation under slavery in the New World, African religions, for example, have been able to flourish under conditions of industrialized, cosmopolitan, urban life. ( Pp. 2, 3 )

Anthropologists and Sociologists have therefore recovered for the African a justification for the African Way of Life and for the African *Weltanschauung*. What has been admitted for other peoples who have made their mark in history is now being admitted for the black people of Africa : an unbiased appraisal of their culture, and a statement of what they stand for. When an African of the present day, with the elation of self-discovery—the realization of the cultural and spiritual soul of his people—makes bold to assert before civilized humanity the individuality and the personality of his race, and to present in an international conference of religions the African interpretation of life and the world and the African's yearnings and aspirations to reach the domain of the hidden forces of life, it may be looked upon only as a presumption by the arrogant peoples who have been dominating the African and who were seeking particularly to deny any access to Divinity by the Black African. But lovers of Humanity will all appreciate the position, and will look upon such a situation to be fraught with immense significance for the whole of Humanity. It is symbolical of the self-realization and self-assertion of the representatives of a hundred millions of Humanity who were doomed to desperation and to the slow strangulation of their God-

given Personality. "The Emergence of an African Personality"—this is how some of the leaders of present-day Black Africa are characterizing the rising tide of an African Renaissance, cultural, intellectual and spiritual.

I have, from the time that I undertook my visit to West Africa in 1954, been exercised to find out the bases of what I call an *Africanism*—a Statement or Formulation of the Ideals and Realizations of Africa, of Black Africa's Way of Thought and Way of Life. This is very necessary at the present moment, both for Black Africa and for all other branches of the Human Family.

#### The Various Ways of Life : Hellenism

*Africanism* : when we can properly analyse and formulate it, we can place the ideology behind it side by side with other great Attitudes to Life both seen and unseen, which are characterized by what are known as Hellenism, Hebraism, Indianism, Europeanism, etc. etc. It has been convenient to give a suitable label like the above, according to the people among whom it originated or the place with which it became associated, to these different Ways of Life. Thus we have the Ancient Greek Way of Life, to which the label *Hellenism* has been given. The Hellenes or Ancient Greeks, as a highly civilized people with original contributions of the greatest importance made by them to human civilization, laid a very great stress on some ideals, which of course, had a universal appeal as well. Thus, for example, in the Greek Way of Life there was a Sense of Beauty in connexion with whatever came within their purview, and particularly in the Human Form and in the appurtenances of Human Life. This resulted in the perfect order and balance combined with sensitive beauty and even an aesthetic mysticism which we find in both Greek art and literature. The Ancient Greeks, again, were for Moderation—for "nothing too much"—they did not

permit anything to be in excess, there was no love of exaggeration—of the grotesque and the unnatural among the Greeks. The Greeks had also a great Sense of Human Values, and this had found expression in their Democratic Attitude, although it was contradicted by their allowing the institution of Slavery to flourish. Social well-being was another great ideal of the Greeks, which went hand in hand with Democracy, and this made the Greeks some of the first successful thinkers of political science. They had an inherent interest and curiosity with regard to the facts of existence, and this made the Greeks, under the guidance of a thinking genius like Aristotle, the creators of modern science. Then the Greeks felt curiosity and a deep interest in Man as Man, and they were actuated in what they called *Anthropotes*, the word was Latinized as *Humanitas* or "Humanity"—*Manavikata*, as we have rendered it in Sanskrit—a Sense of the Oneness of Mankind. The Ancient Greeks also had a deep sense of the Ultimate Reality, which we see in their poets and thinkers, like Aeschylus and Socrates and Plato and their successors. All these notions and ideas are brought together under the epithet of *Hellenism*. It is not that these ideas are entirely the possession of the Greeks alone, but civilized man everywhere would agree with these. But the Ancient Greeks as a people sought to make these ideas most effective in their lives, they doubly underlined them, so to say, in their culture ; and that is the reason why we call these ideals in their sum-total *Hellenism*.

### Hebraism

Similarly, there is a *Hebraism*, which is the attitude of the Hebrews or Jews towards life, both seen and unseen, which we find in the more significant books of the Old Testament. Hebraism has been, owing to the course of events in history, an important factor through Christianity

in the evolution of mediaeval and modern European mentality, and hence it has got its peculiar importance. In its nature Hebraism is more theistic and theological, and it is specially conscious of the Unity and Omnipotence of the Godhead, and of Human Personality being linked up with the Godhead through willing service. Hebraism insisted upon the need for a Sense of Sin, or wilful violation of the Laws of God as it itself conceived them to be; and there is also in Hebraism an insistence upon Repentance and Atonement in order to escape the resultant punishment for Sin from the hand of God—a punishment which might mean eternal suffering after death.

### Sinism

In a similar way, there can be enunciated a Sinism or a Chinese Way of or Attitude to Life. The deeper things in this Sinism are the ideas we find in the philosophy of Taoism as formulated by Lao Tze and by both his unknown predecessors and his followers and disciples like Chuang Tze. On the social and mundane side, Sinism has its most famous exponent in Confucius with his teachings. There is in Sinism, on the one hand (as expressed by Taoism), a profound sense of an Unseen Reality permeating the Universe, and there is also the idea that Man should try to be in tune with this Unseen Reality, with this Infinity, and in that alone can the highest peace and happiness be achieved, both individually, and socially. On the other hand, there is in Sinism the attitude, which was insisted upon by a practical philosopher and reformer like Confucius, that man must place himself under some political and social discipline, which was to order his life according to certain ideals and make him follow a more or less regulated, if not exactly regimented, course in his social and corporate life, though not in the intellectual and spiritual sides of his being.

### Europeanism

In a like manner we can talk in a general way of a *Europeanism*, which presents itself before the modern world in the form of an active faith in the destiny of man as the ultimate controller of the forces of Nature through his science, harnessing Nature to the service of Man for his physical, intellectual and aesthetic well-being; and the spiritual is not excluded from this. Europeanism in its highest ideals lays particular stress on the Intellect, and at the same time there is a full scope for approach to the Unseen Reality through both Reason and Emotionalism. One of the other key-notes of Europeanism is its great sense of Humanity, which it has received ultimately from the Ancient Greeks through the Romans. The basic things of Hellenism have also contributed some of the best elements of Europeanism. As in every kind of Way of Life, there are contradictions in Europeanism. Some forms of religious exclusiveness and intolerance have been obtained from the sectarian Christian religion, as a legacy of Hebraism; and the ideas of racial exclusiveness, of which *Apartheid* is the worst expression, are some of the evil and noxious weeds in the garden of Europeanism. But in considering a Way of Life, we are generally concerned with the more elevated elements, which are more human and more universal, rather than with their contradictions, which in a spirit of optimism we can look upon as being only passing and ephemeral.

### Arabism and Islam

Islam presents, in its pure form, as in the Quran, another Way of Life which is largely the result of the atmosphere of Arabism in which the prophet of Islam had lived and breathed and had his being. In a way Islam was a reflex of Hebraism and was a Semitic creation, but subsequently the spirit of this Quranic Islam was profoundly

modified by the impact of the Indo-European spirit of Hellenistic Greece and Sasanian Iran, and later of Indian Vedanta, and led to a much more universal development of Islam in the shape of *Tasawwuf*, or the Sufi Way of Life. This Sufi Way of Life had completed itself by absorbing certain finer elements of both Indianism and Hellenism, and as a composite or synthesis, it has got a much wider human appeal, an appeal to the deeper sensibilities of man.

### Indianism

We are also trying to formulate an *Indianism*, which has been also called *Bharata-Dharma* or *Bharata-Yana*. Indianism is certainly one of the great ideologies which are now working either consciously or unconsciously in the minds of men in different lands. When the German Philosopher Schopenhauer declared, over 100 years ago, that the Upanishads were the solace of his life and would be the solace of his death, and when in recent years a Dutch Sanskritist like Barend Faddegon declared that he adored India because he adored 'the Things of the Spirit', we have a sort of a homage paid to the Indian Spirit, to *Bharata-Dharma*, *Bharata-Yana* or *Indianism*, although with not a very distinct consciousness of the elements or characteristic components of this Indianism. I shall not try to give the views of different Indian as well as European scholars in this connexion. Sometimes these views would be contradictory; but there are certain essential characteristics of this *Bharata-Dharma* or *Indianism* to which all will give assent. Generally, it is admitted that Indianism stands for a belief in an Unseen Reality, which is arrived at either by Intuitive Faith or by Intellectual Ratiocination, or by Reason and Faith both. This Reality is not sought to be tied down to any mythical being or 'historical' personality—to any single prophet or incarnation as presenting it in its own essence exclusively. Indianism believes in the

Oneness of Life and Being, in one Single Principle running through the Universe—the Universe itself being the expression of a process of movement or dynamism which perhaps has no beginning or end. This Principle manifests itself in various ways ; and out of a poetic reaction to these manifestations, as they present themselves to the mind of man, arises a beautiful series of myths, that is, stories or legends about the Gods and Goddesses and their work both in Nature and in the Inner Spirit of Man. The *summum bonum* in the life of man is the realization of this Principle which is both innate and transcendent in the Universe, in both the Macrocosm and Microcosm. This realization is to be made in man's inner being, and will show in the outward behaviour and practices of his life. Indianism also takes note of this tragic fact that there is Sorrow and Suffering in this world ; and it is the duty of man to free himself from all Sorrow and Suffering by either the path of knowledge and self-culture, or of faith, or of good action. This sense of Sorrow and Suffering has been considered also from a moral point of view ; and within the fold of Indianism has been established, though not as a dogma or doctrine requiring allegiance from all, the theories of *Karma* and *Samsara*, of Actions in life which bring in good or bad results according as they are good or bad, and Rebirth or Transmigration. There has also developed in Indianism a Sense of the Sacredness of All Life, and its attitude to life in general is marked by a great Compassion and Sympathy as well as Active Service and Good-doing. The principle of *Ahimsa* or Non-injury is the negative expression of this Sense of Sacredness of Life ; and on the positive side, it is characterized by *Upeksha* or ignoring evils received, *Mudita* or the spirit of graciousness and happiness in all circumstances, *Karuna* or a feeling of pity and charity, and *Maitri* or a spirit of active friendship by doing good : these are the ways of putting into practice



this Sense of Sacredness of all Life in Indianism. There is also the idea that *Rita* (*Rta*) i. e. 'Course' or 'Eternal Law', or *Dharma* which is generally translated as 'Righteousness', but which really means 'the Principle which holds together the Universe', as an expression in this world of the Ultimate Reality, forms the background of life and envelopes life; and according to the Indian Way of Life, it is the duty of man and society to make this *Rita* or *Dharma* active and fruitful in every sphere. Two other noteworthy characteristics of Indianism are its Note of Intellectualism and its Spirit of Tolerance. The intellectual approach to things is always advocated in the Indian Way of Thinking. The commonest word for *Man* in Sanskrit, which is an Indo-European inheritance shared also with the Germanic world, *manu* (*manava*, *manusya*), takes note of the human being as a thinking being—*homo sapiens*. The highest prayer of the Sanskrit World, the *Gayatri* Verse from the *Rig-Veda*, is a prayer for contemplating the Glory of the Creator Who is asked to direct our thoughts or mind. Another great prayer runs like this: "Thou art clear (in the Universe): be Thou clear for me" (*avir, avir ma edhi*). And Toleration, or Respect for Other People's Ideas, has always been the corner-stone of the Indian Way of Life, when the *Rig-Veda* accepted the position that "That Which Is is a Unique Being (*ekam sat*), and It has been described by different sages in a manifold way (*vipra bahudha vadanti*)".

In the case of a person actuated by Indianism, his behaviour or action towards all men, towards all living beings as a matter of fact, takes a colouring from the principles of Non-injury, of Compassion, of Gentleness, and of Friendly Service. He is characterized by a certain type of gentleness of spirit and of humility, particularly in the matter of the Unseen Forces of Life, by a desire to give to others their proper due, and by a liberal attitude with regard to other peoples' faiths and beliefs. The over-all

picture presented by Indianism is that of a thoughtful kindliness with a hankering for inner peace, and complete absence of a militant zeal to bring people to a particular way of thought or behaviour, in the role and spirit of a self-appointed agent of a true God who is jealous of other Gods.

#### Africanism

To come to a similar statement about an *Africanism*: in spite of the present ideological chaos and the intellectual ferment as well as social and political frustration in which the Black Peoples of Africa find themselves, there is a basic mentality and attitude to things which characterize the African race, and it should not be difficult to formulate an Africanism. Scientific Anthropologists; Students of History and Culture without bias, and with an objective point of view; European Administrators with a sense of justice and fair-play, with understanding and sympathy and a regard for the under-dog; Christian Missionaries with an enlightened and humane view of things, which rises superior to their church dogmas and the limitations of their community; as well as cultured African Scholars and others, who want to understand their own people—to understand themselves:—all of them are helping to create the atmosphere and the ground for understanding the Black Man of Africa. Dr. Busia and Dr. Danquah in Ghana and Dr. Azikiwe in Eastern Nigeria are typical of such African Scholars who are successfully interpreting African thought and African life. Father Placide Tempels in his "*Philosophie Bantoue*" (1945) has given a very fine objective study of the ideas underlying Bantu religion and life. Dr. Geoffrey Parrinder of Ibadan University is well-known for his highly informative and sympathetic studies of African religion and psychology. I shall have occasion to mention or quote from other authorities whose works are helping us

to formulate this Africanism, like Dr. Bascom and Captain Rattray, not to speak of the earlier generation of writers.

With the independence of Ghana as a pure African State, with the immediate prospect of the Yorubas and the Igbos, the Hausas and others of Nigeria becoming similarly independent, and with the West African peoples under French domination and other Africans also finally coming to their own, it would be quite in the nature of things to study and bring before the civilized world what African peoples really stand for ; and in this way we can define Africanism in its essential components. Already work in this line is being done by the Anthropologists and Sociologists, both among pure Africans and among Europeans ; and ere long men everywhere will have occasion to profit by a study and an appreciation of the best elements of African life and thought presented before the world by the formulation of an Africanism of this type.

As a lay observer in West Africa, I would venture to suggest these ideas, among others, as characterizing Africanism :

A Sense of an Unseen Force or Spirit being present, as well as working, in all things, animate or inanimate, in the Universe ;

A Faith in the existence of a Supreme Divinity, which is the same as the Unseen Spirit in a personified manifestation, and to which Man can have direct access,—this Supreme Divinity functioning in the affairs of men through the lesser Gods and Spirits ;

A Sense of the Continuity of Life, the World of the Dead and the World of the Living being interlinked forever ;

A Preference for the Community rather than the Individual in social life ; and,

A keen Sense of both Rhythm and Colour and Form, which is manifested in African dance and drum music, in

African dress and African art (of sculpture), among West African peoples like the Mende, the Wolof, the Mossi, the Songhoi, the Akan, the Ewhe, the Yoruba, the Edo, the Igbo, etc. etc., and Bantu peoples throughout Central Africa and South Africa.

The Black African must, if he is to stand on his own dignity before the rest of mankind, shake off certain inhibitions and inferiority complexes which have been sedulously injected in his mental and spiritual make-up, and have even been seriously cultivated by him, and all in good faith. The African Christian and Muslim must give a new orientation to the expressions 'heathen' and 'pagan'; and the African person who has not formally affiliated himself to a new religion must not feel ashamed at being called a 'pagan', but on the other hand he should, with the dawning of a self-consciousness, feel proud to be a 'pagan.' The old theological approaches are proving untenable before the human sciences of Anthropology and Sociology. The Black African, whatever his religion, should feel proud of his 'pagan' ancestors, as much as the European Christians are of their own 'heathen' forbears, with their pre-Christian religion, whether Germanic or Celtic, Italic or Slavic, or Greek, and as much as the Muslims of Egypt are proud of their Egyptian ancestors, those of Iran of their Zoroastrian fore-fathers, and of India and Indonesia of their ancestors who were Hindus and Buddhists. They must appreciate the position that African 'heathenism' or 'paganism' has its aspects of wisdom and humanity, of reason and goodness, and that it was never something extraordinary. Greek Paganism is a matter of sympathetic study and understanding and even pride in Western Christendom. The bases of African Paganism and the Old Social Order in Black Africa are to be studied with care and sympathy, and not condemned outright as something to be ashamed of, only because early Christian Missionaries

who did not understand it had condemned it. There is bound to be in African Paganism things of value for the whole human race. In any case, African Paganism had and still has a meaning and message for the African Man. The African Man of the present day, for the sake of the health of his soul and the full realization of his personality, must study it with love and pride as something which is his very own, and to use whatever good he can find in it to rehabilitate himself. Talking about native African religion, I cannot do better in this context than quote from Dr. William R. Bascom once again :

A variety of forces have impinged on African systems of belief, all of which have tended to undermine and destroy it. It is surprising in fact that they have not totally achieved this result. African religion reaches a high point among the Yoruba, Dahomeans and Ewe of West Africa, who have systematic polytheistic theologies embodied in an extensive mythology, elaborate rituals, formal and often lengthy initiations, and complex cult organisations. Even these truly elaborate religious systems have been dismissed simply as animism, nature worship, fetishism, or juju, and there was no recognition of good features on which to build for the future..... The most important thing to be done to-day is to undo the evils of Western ethnocentrism by stressing the good features of African culture rather than the bad, and what Africans had done for themselves and for the world, rather than what we have done for them. It is more important to give the African a pride in his own past, and it is to preserve any feature of the past for the future. ("African Culture and the Missionary", as published in *Civilisations*, Institut International des Civilisations Differentes, Brussels, Vol. III, no. 4, 1953 : from a typescript kindly supplied by Dr. Bascom. )

It is generally accepted as a principle that in the development of the African Personality, the best elements of their own culture are to be studied, understood and conserved, and combined with the best not only from the West but also from the East, from Asia, that the African Man needs. It will not do for the Black African peoples to renounce their cultural heritage, even in religion, as dark and superstitious and shameful, and try to be transformed into imitation Englishmen or Frenchmen or Arabs. That is why a correct attitude to their past culture including their religion, is necessary. They must meet all implications squarely, and not fight shy of them, because the White Missionaries did not understand them and expressed their disapproval of them.

#### Some Special Aspects of Africanism

It is the duty of the educated and enlightened sections of the African peoples to go to the bases of their culture. Some of the basic notions as they have evolved among the Black African peoples would appear to have supplied also some of the bases of Ancient Egyptian thought as well as conceptions relating to both the Unseen and the seen worlds. Thus, for instance, we have to take note of the West African conception of the Human Personality and the Human Soul. Typical among African notions are those which have been developed rather elaborately among the Akan peoples of West Africa. The human soul (according to the Akan ideology in this matter) consists of various entities—like the *Ntoro* or the physical basis of the soul, the *Sunsum* or the Personality Soul, the *Kra* which means the Spirit or the Divine Soul, and the *Abusua* or the Life-force Soul. These would remind us of the Ancient Egyptian ideas of the Human Personality or Soul being made up of the *Khat* or its Physical Basis, the *Ka* that is to say, the Double, or Abstract Personality, the *Ba* or the

Heart-soul, the *Ab* or the Source of Life and of Good and Evil, the *Khaibit* or the Shadow, the *Kha* that is the Spirit or the Spiritual Soul, the *Sahu* or the Spiritual Body, the *Sekhen* or Power or the Vitality-force Aspect of the Soul, and the *Ren* or the Name of the Man which is also an aspect of the human personality. There are other ideas and practices also, which are to be found both in Ancient Egypt and among the more advanced Black Peoples of Africa. Usually they are looked upon as being due to the influence of Ancient Egypt on Black Africa. But it is exceedingly likely that Ancient Egypt got its basic ideologies, about the human soul and other matters connected with the Unseen World, from the Black African substratum in her population, on which the Hamite elements were superimposed, to give rise to the Ancient Egyptian People.

In this connexion, we may quote the view of the great British Egyptologist, Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, who declared that the fundamental Egyptian beliefs "appear to be indigenous African beliefs, which existed in the Predynastic Period, and are current under various forms at the present day among most of the tribes of the Sudan" (Geoffrey Parrinder, "West African Religion," London 1949, p. 215).

The ideology that is behind the conception of a plurality of the Soul, however, is not confined to Africa alone. Traces of it are found among the Semites—the Arabs, according to competent view, even in early Islamic times, had conception of the Soul being at the same time vegetal, animal, and reasonable, and the reasonable Soul being further modified into the Soul of Wisdom and the Soul of Prophecy. Among some of the peoples of Asia also, similar ideas appear to have been current. The Indian idea of *Samsara* and *Punar-janma* or Transmigration and Rebirth of Souls may have its ultimate basis on this kind of conception of a plurality of the Soul. Be it as it may, in the modern African's relationships and dealings with the

outside world, his own sense of Personality is undoubtedly coloured by some at least of these ideas.

### Dynamism in African Philosophy

The basis of the African religious ideology is in a deep sense of this Supernatural Force being present within and moving everything in this universe, and this conviction forms the mainspring of a philosophico-religious conception which has been called *Animism* or *Dynamism*. Earlier writers on the religious ideas and experiences of Black Africa have misunderstood the nature of this conception of Dynamism, and have called it *Fetishism* or Belief in Supernatural and Magical Powers of some inanimate objects. Along with this there is a belief in the greater and the lesser Gods of their pantheons as manifestations of the Supreme Spirit or Force. This was a kind of Polytheism comparable with that of the early peoples like the Ancient Semites, the Greeks, the Italians, the Celts, the Germans, the Slavs, the Indo-Iranians, as well as the Chinese and the Japanese.

A distinguished student of African philosophy of life, who has worked among a section of the Bantu people, Father P. Tempels, has made the African conception of life, which is widespread among all African peoples and not confined to the Bantu African alone, quite clear. With the Africans, as he has declared,

The supreme value is *force, forceful living, or vital force*.....The Bantus say that they serve to acquire *vigour or vital force, to live forcibly, to reinforce life, or to assure its continuity to their descendants.*

Commenting on this, Dr. Parrinder observes ( "West African Psychology," 1951, pp. 8, 9, 10 ) :

Force, power, energy, vitality, life, dynamism, these are the operative notions behind prayers to God, invocations of divinities, offerings to ancestors, everything that



may be termed religion, including therein what we are pleased to designate "magic" or "medicine." The aim of all these practices being to strengthen and affirm life.....

All beings in the visible and invisible worlds possess some degree or type of force, whether we call it "soul" or not, animate or inanimate.....

It is evident, then, that the whole tone of the philosophy of most African peoples is distinctly life-affirming. Here is no pessimism, or other-worldly way of negation. While a "spiritual" world, and a life after death, are most surely believed in, yet the aim of religion is positively "this-worldly".....

It might be said that European philosophy assumes that the universe is inanimate, following the presuppositions of materialistic science, whereas African philosophy assumes that there is life, or at least power, in all things, being thereby nearer to the modern conception of all-pervading energy.

Dr. Parrinder does not think that the African conception of this pervading force is pantheistic, in the sense of viewing the universe as animated by a world-force, an all-embracing God or power, and therefore in his view this is not the same as the Hindu or European interpretation. But like the African, the Hindu also recognizes, though on a lower plane, individuality, a hierarchy, good and evil, life and death. I think this matter should be pursued in greater detail, and when we are a little more familiar with an African Way of Thought based on closer investigations, deeper and more serious comparison will lead to the existence of a closer agreement between African thought and that of other peoples like the Greeks, the Hindus, and the Chinese, within the wider circle of what has been called by Aldous Huxley "the Perennial Philosophy" which is universal.

The views of William Fagg of the Department of Ethnology in the British Museum, whose contributions to the study of African Archæology and of African Art are well-known, may be quoted here ("Catalogue of the Webster Plass Collection of African Art", British Museum, London, 1953, p. 9) :

The core of the [African] system [of thought] is an ontology, or theory of the nature of being, in which 'being' is regarded as a process rather than a state, and beings (including inanimate objects) as manifestations of force or energy rather than as static matter ; force is not an attribute of being, but is itself being. (The convergence with the findings of modern physics is remarkable, though not to be pressed too far). These forces are subject to increase or diminution under the influence of other forces, and existence itself is of variable intensity. Within the context of this system of metaphysics, as expounded in detail by Tempels, many traits in African culture which appear absurd and inexplicable when stated in European terms—such as the belief that the health of a divine king directly ( and not by homœopathy ) affects the wellbeing of his people—are readily seen to be intelligible, reasonable and logical.

An overwhelming sense of this Spirit or Force being in operation in all the affairs of man and the world, has given an important character to the life of the Black African. He was not so much interested in devising and continuing the paraphernalia of a complex civilization, to be left for posterity. as in *living intensely his present life*. Herein is one of the great appeals of African life, this pristine freshness of a natural existence, which is receding into the background with hyper-civilization. There is a very pronouncedly vital character in all that the African has done or has produced, although in comparison with other peoples they

have not created much by way of a tangible material civilization.

Some Points of Agreement between Africanism  
and Other Ways of Life

Lovers of Man everywhere are waiting with a great amount of interest and expectation the full realization of their Personality and the formulation of the African Way by the thinkers of present-day Black Africa. In India, those of us who have glanced even superficially into this matter will rejoice to find that there is nothing in Africanism which goes counter to the fundamental notions which have been evolved in our Indianism. Higher Hindu thought, as in the philosophy of the Vedanta, for example, can see in the basic African conception of this Vital Force operating through everything that exists, another interpretation or expression of the Supreme Spirit as the Ultimate Reality, the Way and the Law, the All-Holder and the Truth, as formulated in India. The basic ideas of Old Chinese thought as in the conception of *Tao* or the Way is also of a piece with this. The Hindu conception of the Ultimate Reality (Which is beyond perception, beyond thought and words) as manifesting Itself in the Spirits and Forces, the Divinities and Inevitabilities, which become transformed (when clothed with imagination and poetry and Man's yearning for personal contacts with this Force) into living Gods and Goddesses, whose presence is felt and who help or thwart Man and guide him or goad him through good and evil, is also paralleled by similar ideas and beliefs in what is called in contempt "African Paganism" or "African Heathenism."

The disinterested analysis of the African Way of Life in the background of the economic bases and the forces of history would show that it has (as have all the various Ways of Life which were devised elsewhere) things which

are good, things which are useless, and things which are bad ; and there are bound to be in this African Way also certain elements which have a permanent meaning and value for all mankind. With African scholars like Dr. J. B. Danquah and Dr. K. A. Busia, both of Ghana, taking up the study of the religious and philosophical concepts and the social and cultural back-grounds of their own people, assisted by scholars in the human sciences and in the humanistic tradition from the West (and may be from Asia also), the formulation of an Africanism, and the study and cultivation of the enduring aspects of it, will be for the good of Mankind. Some enlightened Missionaries and others in Africa have indeed come forward, to whom the African Way of Thought and Way of Life are not something to be condemned out-right and brushed aside as dark and sinister, cruel and unmeaning and merely the creation of the evil forces and ignorances of life. They really give their support to the view of the ancient Indian thinker when he makes God declare ; "I am the same for all creatures. There is none whom I hate or whom I specially favour." (*samo'ham sarva-bhutesu, na me dvesyo na ca priyah* : the Bhagavad-Gita, IX, 29). But although Missionaries of orthodox Christianity or of Islam in many cases do really wish to bring the good life and the light of the True Faith (as they conceive it to be) to the African, they still cannot always get rid of the idea, engendered by an exclusive and intolerent theology, that they can, and should try to "put all human souls in the same uniform". Nevertheless, some of the Christian Missionaries (much to the bewilderment and opposition of many of their orthodox fellow-workers) have declared that "God has also spoken to the African Man", and that "African Paganism, the unseen African wisdom, aspires from the bottom of its African soul towards the very soul of Christian spirituality" (Father P. Tempels, as quoted by

Geoffrey Parrinder in "West African Psychology", London 1951, p. 225).

In the eloquent tribute which Dr. J. B. Danquah has paid (in his "Akan Doctrine of God", London 1944, pp. 185 ff.) to the German Evangelical Missionary among the Akans, J. G. Christaller, who brought out his great works "the Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi)" and his collection of "Twi Mmebusem" or Akan Proverbs (Basel, 1879), these observations are worth considering :

But for Christaller's foresight in recording in permanent and highly intelligible form the scattered elements of the beliefs and hopes and fears of the Akan people at that particular juncture in the nineteenth century when European ideas in the form of a new learning, a new religion and a new economic life were sweeping the country, the Akan people of the Gold Coast of West Africa would today have failed to bring their indigenous contribution to the spiritual achievements of mankind.

Dr. Danquah further quotes from Christaller's Preface to his Collection of Akan Proverbs :

"May this Collection give a new stimulus to the diligent gathering of folk-lore and to the increasing cultivation of native literature. May those Africans who are enjoying the benefit of a Christian education, make the best of the privilege ; but let them not despise the sparks of truth entrusted to and preserved by their own people, and let them not forget that by entering into their way of thinking and by acknowledging what is good and expounding what is wrong they will gain the more access to the hearts and minds of their less favoured countrymen."

Finally, Dr. Danquah's personal conviction in this matter should be seriously considered by all Africans :

Who, in Christaller's opinion, entrusted these sparks of truth to the Akan people ? Does not his particular phrasing suggest that he had come to revere and look upon this Old Testament of the Akan as divinely inspired ? The [Akan] system.....is "evidence of the everlasting transmutations of the Holy Ghost in the World." In other words, the Spirit of God is abroad even in the Akan of the Gold Coast.

And Captain Rattray's summing-up, as quoted in a valuable book on *African Ideas of God*, a collection of 12 papers by different authorities forming a symposium on African thought and religion among different peoples of the entire continent (London 1950, p. 258), may be given as being *à propos* :

I sometimes think that, had these people been left alone to work out their own salvation, sooner or later, perhaps, some African Messiah would have arisen and swept their pantheons and religion clean of the *suman* (fetish). Then West Africa might have become the cradle of a new religion, which acknowledges one Great Spirit, Who, being one, nevertheless manifested Himself in everything around them, and taught men to hear His voice in the flow of His waters and in the sounds of His winds among the trees.

In any scheme of cultural development for the African, there must be, if only to bring back his sense of self-respect and ability to excel himself, a knowledge of what (as an expression of the African mind) Africans have done for themselves, and what they can do in the present conditions of life, both for themselves and for the rest of the world.

The Art and Culture of Black Africa,  
and its Value for the World

Most cultured people who are interested in what Man has done and is doing outside of their own narrow circles (whether that of the European world, or the Far-Eastern, or the South-Eastern Asiatic, or the Islamic, or, again, the American) know that, under tremendously adverse circumstances, the African Spirit, through Negro slaves who were taken to the Western world, has enriched the culture of America and the modern world by its contribution to music and the dance (Jazz and Rumba) and to literature (Brer Rabbit Stories, and Negro Blues and Negro Spirituals). This is indeed a great tribute to the capacity of the African mind, which refused to be crushed even under the dead-weight of slavery in all its cruel barbarousness, and has made enough new contributions which are distinctly its own. Listening to the singing of Negro spirituals at Tuskegee University in Alabama, that famous centre of American Negro education and culture built by the great Negro leader Booker T. Washington, the late *Dina-bandhu* C. F. Andrews, a great-hearted Englishman who was an intimate friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore and who dedicated his life to the welfare of the Indian people, was tremendously impressed, and he wrote (in 1929) as follows :

But when I heard the singing of the songs which had been composed by the fore-fathers of this American Negro race from the very depths of Slavery, now sung by their children who were free, in a school of their own creation, immediately my heart was touched and the very same spiritual vision seemed to come before my eyes, that had been apparent to me in the other creative impulses of the human heart that I have already mentioned ( the institution with its buildings etc. ).....It seems to me

that there is no race upon the earth more richly endowed with gifts for the future than the Negro race.

### African Sculpture

The great qualities of African Art, both in sculpture and in the decorative crafts, and even in some types of architecture, are giving the African a place in the comity of peoples who have enriched the Art of the World. *African Sculpture* in the round as well as in relief, in wood, in ivory, in terra-cotta, and in bronze, has won the approbation of discriminating art critics like Roger Fry, and it has been able to give some points to the sculpture of modern Europe. The traditions of African sculpture go back at least to the early centuries of the first millennium B. C., when we take into note the wonderful pre-historic terra-cotta heads and other fragments of sculpture which have been discovered by Anthropologists and Archaeological Excavators in Western Africa. The bronze heads and plaques as well as sculptures in the round (single figures and groups) which came to Europe after the sack of Benin in Nigeria in 1897 by the British, were a revelation, together with the huge carved ivory tusks and ivory caskets, as well as wood sculpture of various kinds. In this series of Benin bronze and ivory work, there are one or two master-pieces which now-a-days figure in all books on the History of Art—one may mention particularly the head of a Benin Princess (preserved in two beautiful versions, in the British Museum and the Berlin Ethnological Museum) with a ceremonial crown decorated with coral beads, showing a face which is beautifully characteristic of the African racial type and which shows a deeply pensive and wistful and a sad mood, and even a spiritual quality which is most marvellous. This art of Benin on which so much has been written in Europe is an art which is entirely Africa's own, and it does not appear



to owe anything to the Portuguese or other Europeans. The bronze casting of Benin and West Africa may go back to the ancient art of Egypt and Nubia, and in that way it can have its roots in Africa ; but it has been transformed within the *milieu* of West African life and atmosphere. This Benin art may go back to at least the end of the first millennium A. D., and it comes down right to our times, and it is still carrying on the tradition, not only in Benin itself (which is even now giving the best sculptures and bronze works of Western Africa) but also in the brass figure-sculpture and brass gold-weights of Dahomey and Ghana and other places in West Africa. A most wonderful find in African Art has been that series of glorious life-size heads in bronze, depicting mostly beautiful African male types, with one or two figures which are of women. These go back to 1000 A. D., or earlier, according to expert opinion, and they were mostly discovered a little over a decade and a half ago, during the digging of the foundations of a palace at Ife, the religious and cultural centre of the Yoruba people in West Nigeria. These bronze heads have been, after their initial study by European students of Art and Anthropology, now housed (along with some fragments of lovely terra-cottas and other artifacts of old West African workmanship) in a fine little museum at Ife founded by that highly cultured leader of the Yorubas Sir Adesole Adoremi, the Oni of Ife, which it was my privilege to visit in 1954, under the kind guidance of the Oni himself. The bronze art of West Africa can compare favourably with the best that was produced by the Greeks in the 5th century B. C. and by the Renaissance sculptors and bronze-founders of the 16th century A. D. in Italy, and they form a "possession for ever" for the whole of Humanity. They are essentially African, and Black African at that ; and at the same time they are universal. Similarly, we have to mention the

remarkable art of wood sculpture which is current in both Sudanic Africa and Bantu Africa—in the lands of Western Africa, and also in Congo and other areas among the peoples of the Bantu group of the Africans. Some of the full figures in the round, including genre types with a universal appeal, like that of a Mother and Child, mask-figures and figures of ancient Chiefs and Kings of the various tribes, and also figures depicting a purely illustrative art which is free from ritualistic influence—all these present a unique gallery of wood sculpture which has its niche of honour in the World's Hall of Art.

### African Painting

African Painting is now coming to the notice of art-lovers, and we are appreciating the robust vigour of their lines and the strong vitality of their colours, both among the Sudanic Africans and the Bantus. The beginnings of African drawing and painting go back to the pre-historic linear rock engravings of animals and human figures in North Africa which are executed in a firm and vigorous style, and in the rock paintings in the Bushman and Hottentot areas of South Africa. Probably in the strong and beautiful lines which we find in the drawings of the bronze bowls depicting an African scene, which has been found at Karanog in Nubia to the south of Egypt, to which reference has been made before, we have the oldest specimens of an African drawing of African life, although these drawings might have been made under the inspiration or teaching of the Egyptians or the Romans from the North (see *ante*, p. 8). African painting has also to be recognized as a noteworthy contribution of Africa to Art. We can mention a brilliant group of African sculptors like Ben Enwonwu, Ajidasile Orishadikpe and Felix Idubor and others, Saidou the Mossi bronze sculptor from the Ivory Coast, and hundreds of wood and ivory carvers and metal-

workers from West Africa and Congo-land. We have now modern African painters like Kofi Antubam of Achimota Art College, Accra, who in addition to his fine portraits of African celebrities, is giving an artist's expression to the life of the Akan and other peoples of Ghana ; and there are other painters from Congo and other areas of Africa.

African Music & Dance,  
and Dress & Decoration

The African youth should be made to become familiar with this achievement of his own people. In music and in dancing, there is the remarkable development of drum-music in Africa, particularly West Africa, and we can note in this connexion how, with the help of what are called "Talking Drums", news and messages in a tonal language like Yoruba or Twi can be relayed over a wide tract of rountry. The African, as observed before, has got rhythm in his blood, and this drum-music and his passionate love for the dance which he has developed to a remarkable degree are expressions of it. In addition to the drums of various kinds, there are the xylophone (or piano of wooden bars) and the harp which are also distinctive African instruments.

The African's sense of colour is something which has made the old African dress such a feast for the eye. In Ghana the old African dress, which recalls the classic drapery of ancient Greece and Rome, has been preserved to a greater extent than anywhere else ; and Nigerian dress is a compromise between the unsewn 'cloth' or cloak of the African and the loose coloured garments of distinct Arab and Berber influence which we see among the Hausa and Fulbe and other African peoples of the Upper Niger Valley. We are glad to note that the inspiration of Ghana

and Nigeria—and West Africa in general—is succeeding in weaning the African from the cast-off clothing of the European (which are too tight-fitting, unhygienic and uncomfortable for him) and is drawing him to the beauty of the native 'cloth', and the loose garments of West Africa with their beautiful shades of blue and other colours and their embroideries in coloured silk, both for men and women; and the simple though colourful toga-like dress of the Akan and other peoples of Ghana are giving a dignified sort of a pattern to the whole of Black Africa. The designs on Scottish tartans are more than rivalled by the various designs in the Ghanaian hand-woven Kente cloth, either in silk or in cotton, and in gorgeous colours, which are such a characteristic creation among the artistic crafts of Ghana and other areas.

The Africans also, with the limited resources at their disposal, knew how to make life beautiful by paying attention to the construction of their thatched huts, to the designs on their mats, and to the shapes and patterns of their cups and beakers and other daily utensils made of wood or earthenware or brass. For their shape and beauty of line, these creations of African domestic craft have their great value in giving an aesthetic satisfaction. The ceremonial stools or chairs for the Chiefs of the Akan peoples of Ghana and elsewhere in West Africa, and the wooden pillows or head-rests with vigorous type of decoration among Bantu peoples, form another expression of African Art; and these stools in their shapes and designs form among the West Africans something like an equivalent of the Heraldic Art of Europe.

The decorative patterns in the mud architecture of Timbuctoo, Jenne, Segou, Kano and Katsina, of Accra and Kumasi, and Abomey and Benin and other towns in West Africa, and in the simple dwelling hutments of the various Bantu peoples (e. g. the Barotse, the Basuto, the Ndebelle),

are also quite distinctive, and form very striking and pleasant expressions of the artistic spirit of Black Africa.

#### African Literature

African Literature, particularly of animal-stories, is a very noteworthy creation of African fancy and wisdom. The animal-fables of the African have given to America, through the enslaved African Negro, the Brer Rabbit and other entertaining stories. In fact, these African beast-fables rival those of India, which go back to the pre-Christian centuries. Unfortunately, popular or folk-literature in Africa, whether of love-songs or war-ballads or general narrative poems, has not been properly collected, excepting among a few isolated groups, like, for example, the Hausas. But here there is much scope for enquiry and research by both African scholars and foreigners.

Thus among the Soninkes of West Africa, a branch of the great Mandingo people which lives in the area to the south of the Senegal River (upto the great bend of the Niger), there are found fragments of a rich heroic and romantic ballad literature which has been passed on orally from Griot or singer to singer for the last several hundred years—may be for over a millennium; and the pioneer German Africanist Leo Frobenius made this rich early African literature partly known to us when he gave in 1912 an abridged version of the romantic, and characteristically West African (pre-Muslim) Story of the Princess Annallya Tu-Bari and the hero Sambo Gana Prince of Faraka, which ended in a tragedy. (Cf. H. A. Wieschhoff, "African Collections in the University Museum of Philadelphia", 1945, pp. 66 ff.) The more advanced peoples of Africa are sure to have some good *corpus* of popular literature, both narrative and lyrical, which African scholars themselves should start collecting. Myths like those of the Thunder-God Shango and his wife Oya the Goddess of the

Niger River, of Ifa the God of Prophecy, and of similar gods and goddesses among the Yorubas (whose religion has a rich mythology) and other advanced peoples, and other legends and traditions which occur orally, form the basis of a rich Black African literature, which, when collected and presented to the world, will be acclaimed as something new and original and full of beauty, and even of some deep meaning, by lovers of old or traditional literature everywhere. I may mention in this connexion John Wyndham's "Myths of Ife" (Erskine Macdonald, London, 1921), in which an interesting collection of Yoruba myths treated in very readable English blank verse has been presented to English readers, showing both the scientific importance and the literary or humanistic value of such a collection, for both anthropologists and students of religion, and for lovers of literature. Leo Frobenius in his various works, e. g. his "Kulturgeschichte Afrikas," 1939, has given myths and stories from different areas of Africa. M. Quenum in his "Trois Legendes Africaines", Rochefort 1946 and other works has presented legendary and popular literature from West Africa—Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Dahomey. Captain Rattray and other writers have also dealt with the folk-literature from other parts of Africa. Mention has been already made of a work like the "Dieux d' Afrique."

Dr. Alice Werner has given an exhaustive and popular treatment of the "Myths and Legends of the Bantu" (Harrap, London, 1933); and other collections of Bantu stories and fables have been made. The Bantus have more imagination for annual fables and stories of goblins and monsters than for myths and heroic stories, although they have produced a few compositions which have been described as being epic in character, like the Swahili or Eastern Bantu story or saga of the Wakilindi, the story of Liongo Fumo from the Eastern Bantus of Mombasa,

and the South-eastern Bantu story of Hlakanyana and Huvane.

Modern African writers, with their imagination and sensibility as well as their power of observation and expression awakened by contact with European literature, have now come forward ; and after an initial stage of experimentation in the languages of their European masters and teachers—in French and English—they are essaying in their own native tongues. There is a remarkable literature in French and English by African writers : but in addition we have got to note that literatures in Yoruba and Igbo, in Twi and Mende, in Hausa and in Swahili, and in the other Bantu speeches like Xosa and Sotho and Zulu, are coming up. The African has begun to look into the life of his own people, and to describe it with a sympathetic appreciation, or a fervent love, or a critical realism. An African literature giving an account of the life and surroundings of the people themselves will naturally possess a documentary value of the highest importance, besides being a literature of truth and power. With a general all-round rebirth and toning up of the African Mind, we can look forward in this matter to a vast amount of progress, giving to the world an African idealism and an African interpretation and criticism of African life.

**Need for the Study of the African Heritage by the Africans :**

**'Halls' of African Religion & Culture in Universities**

The first task of African leaders of their people should be to encourage and establish a sympathetic study of the life and culture that is around them, and the history of the past that is behind them. This has already started in some of the more advanced centres of African life, and it has taken the shape of a revival of old institutions and

old customs which have nothing in them which can be described as contrary to the Time-spirit.

I would not suggest that those Africans who have by conviction gone over to some other religion should come back to the faith of their ancestors. The hands of clock cannot be turned back. But there should be every attempt made to *nationalize* the religions of foreign origin; and they could be (and have been) nationalized, if they have a universal, all-embracing value. At the same time, it should be the aim of African leaders of thought to *rationalize* as well as to *sublimate* the faith and practice, the religion and ritual of their ancestors, and their Way of Life (as much as it has been done in the case of all religions), when there is nothing opposed to reason and well-being in them. This can only be done with a greater attention being paid to it, and not by relegating it to neglect and oblivion. What I have suggested some time ago I might bring once again to the notice of Africans who are now feeling proud of their own way of life.

This is my suggestion for the consideration particularly of those Africans who have faith in themselves and their culture, and in their ancestral religion as not being something which is to be condemned outright as a creation of the evil forces and so repugnant to God, Who is after all the God of All Mankind; and who may believe in their native religion (of course in its higher aspects) as being still capable of meeting the needs of the times. The authorities of the University College of Ibadan in West Nigeria, one of the biggest of African cities which has become a most important centre for education and culture (particularly for the Yoruba people, numbering some five millions), have, as part of the well-appointed university buildings, including fine student-hostels, erected a Christian chapel (with a most beautiful group of sculpture in wood by the famous Nigerian sculptor, Ben Enwonwu,



depicting the Resurrected Christ before Maria Magdalena), as well as a Muslim mosque, for the use of Christian and Muslim students. Why not also have in the campus of Ibadan University (and subsequently in other centres of Yoruba life and culture) a sort of a *Hall of Olorun* (Olorun is the name of the Supreme God in the Yoruba religion), suitably decorated with figures or scenes from the rich mythology of the Yorubas in the severe and vigorous style of Yoruba wood-sculpture? Here Yoruba *Babalowos* or priests and wise men may formulate for the benefit both of Africans and of Humanity at large the bases of African (Yoruba) religious experience and thought, and reinterpret the truth and the mystic perception that are behind the myths and traditions and cults and rituals of African religion. They may well be taught to work in collaboration with enlightened and sympathetic Anthropologists and Sociologists, and with believers in all religions being but diverse paths seeking to take man to the Ultimate Reality and to make him be in tune with the Infinite, whether they are Africans or non-Africans. This will enable the young African intellectual to understand some of the basic things in his own ancestral inheritance in the domain of the spirit. Similarly, there may be *Halls of Nyankumpon* for young persons, and old, of the great Akan people of Gold Coast, in Kumasi and elsewhere, which could very well be decorated by an artist like Kofi Antubam who has painted the life and culture of his own Akan people with love and understanding and with almost an inspired exaltation; *Halls of Ngewo* in Freetown and other places for the Mende people of Sierra Leone; a *Hall of Nyonmo* in Accra and elsewhere for the Gan people; *Halls of Chi* or *Halls of Chukwu* for the Igbo or Ibo people, who are some five millions strong, in Enugu and Onitsha and other centres in Nigeria. The native African names for the Supreme Spirit in other parts of the

continent, e. g. *Unkulunkulu* among the Zulus, *Molimo* among the Basuto, *Leza* among Rhodesian, Tanganyikan and Upper Congo Bantus, *Mulungu* or *Murungu* among the Nyasa and other East African Bantus, *Morimo* among the Bechuana, *Ngai* among the Kikuyu, etc., etc. may also similarly be made a rallying point for the Africans, to enable them to be conscious of their present-day life and their regeneration and rehabilitation as self-respecting peoples.

There must develop a spirit of love and reverence for culture of the Past, if one is to get any strength from it ; and this love and reverence is necessary if one is to have faith in one's own people. We may note in this connexion that President Sukarno of Indonesia, in formulating the Five Great Principles (*Pantja-Sila*, or *Pancha-Sila*) as actuating his people on the eve of their freedom, mentioned as the first item "Faith in one's own Race or People", and then "Faith in Humanity as a whole," and after that "Faith in Freedom" and "Faith in Justice", and finally "Faith in God (or the Ultimate Reality)". Buddha had formulated his *Pancha-Sila* for the moral life of the *Individual*—not to kill or do violence, not to steal or rob, not to tell a lie, not to be immoral in dealing with women, and not to indulge in intoxicants of any kind. Then some 2500 years later, Ahmad Sukarno announced in 1945 his *Pancha-Sila* for the life of a *Nation* ; and finally, a decade after that, Prime Minister Sri Jawaharlal Nehru of India, with the support of Chou En-lai of China, announced his *Pancha-Sila* as a code for *International Behaviour*.

Discriminating foreigners who have been friends of the Africans, like, for example, Captain (Dr.) R. S. Rattray, whose scientific studies of Ashanti culture and religion are well known, have deplored the lack of this faith and love and reverence, which is due to ignorance and apathy. I can

once again quote, as I did before on a previous occasion, the following observations of Capt. Rattray from his *Ashanti* (Oxford 1923, pp. 87 ff.) :

The educated African, however, has been cut off from, and is out of sympathy with, the life of his own people. He has learned, in nine cases out of ten, if he has not actually been taught, to despise his own illiterate brethren and the unlettered past of his race. Concerning that past he really knows little or nothing, and generally cares less. Bosman, writing two hundred years ago, mentions 'the Negro who ridiculed his own country's gods'. If, as probable, he has been educated in one of the mission schools, then his whole training, until quite recently, has been one in which it has not appeared orthodox or even conceivable to his teachers that there might be something in the African's own culture and religious beliefs worthy of retention side by side ( for a time at least ) with the greater, because higher, ethical teachings of Christian theology.

Such being the case, can one wonder that African pupils and converts alike have been quick to see and very ready to follow a trend of thought which denied, or ignored, the possibility of anything useful or good or ethical existing in the African's own religion.

The result has been that the cultured and the semi-educated Africans alike (with a few exceptions), when asked about the beliefs of their own people, unconsciously paint them in all the unreal and exotic colours with which their new training and their new environment have taught them to regard them.

They feel, and they have been trained to believe, that they are brands plucked from the burning. It is almost impossible that such persons can be sympathetic with their own past, a past which after all few of them have ever really known, seen or clearly understood.

He further continues, and gives his views as to the right way of approaching the older people who are the custodians of the wisdom that is behind Africanism :

The old expert, the custodian of the past lore of his race, whose head is full of wisdom undreamed of in the seventh standard board-school philosophy of the interpreter, is never going to open that store-house at the bidding of a stranger and a foreigner, with whom he has to converse with such a medium .....

He must first gain their fullest confidence and inspire their trust and affection. He must make them believe that his interest in them is not one of idle curiosity or kindly superiority, nor yet again merely inspired by love of knowledge. I approached these old people and this difficult subject (their religious beliefs) in the spirit of one who came to them as a seeker after truths, the key to which I told them they alone possessed, which not all the learning nor all the books of the white man could ever give to me.

I made it clear to them that I asked access to their religious rites such as are here described for this reason. I attended these ceremonies with all the reverence and respect I could accord to something which I felt to have been already very old, before the religion of my country had yet been born as a new thought ; yet not so entirely new, but that even its roots stretched back and were fed from that same stream which still flows in Ashanti to-day.

The stream crosses the path,

The path crosses the stream ;

Which of them is the elder ?

Did we not cut a path to go and meet this stream ?

The stream had its origin long, long, ago,

It had its origin in the Creator.

He created things,

Pure, pure Tano.

More advanced peoples of Africa and Asia as well as of Europe and America, who are in possession of a definite and well-formulated philosophy of life, are only to view with sympathy and friendliness the African's attempt to rediscover himself and to be firmly established in his own environment.

The intellectual and spiritual ideal of the civilized man in the modern age is *to know all, and to be in all* (as the old Indian sages have said—*sa sarvajnah sarvam avivesa* : "knowing all, he has entered into everything") ; and the civilized mind of France has given the dictum—*tout savoir est tout pardonner*—"to know all is to pardon all". Closer contacts between different peoples and different ideologies are the order of the day. Our opportunities for knowing all kinds of experiences and attitudes and interpretations are increasing from day to day. Without moving away from the philosophy of life which has been built for us and to which we might be giving our allegiance, it should not be repugnant to a modern civilized man to give his support to all Attempts at arriving at the Good Life and to all Interpretations of the Great Riddle behind Life, provided there is nothing in such attempts which affects the rights of other groups and which is not contrary to the dictates of universal morality. The general trend in the whole of Humanity is to permit full play of intellect and imagination in solving the Mystery of Being, and to welcome different interpretations. The real or basic Modern Attitude is something like the Agnostic Attitude, which does not assert the infallibility of any dogma or creed, but keeps its mind open to infinite possibilities from all sides. Viewed from this angle, the strivings of the African for the Good Life and for being in tune with the Infinite deserve our fullest sympathetic consideration, and even intellectual and moral support.

I think such a catholic outlook is to be found in the teachings of Jesus also. We should ponder over the implications of this great saying of Christ—"In my Father's house are many mansions." The famous passage in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is also in consonance with the teachings of Christ, who came to fulfill and not to destroy: "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The following passages from the Quran, as an expression of a deep underlying catholicity in Islam, are also noteworthy: "To every nation We appointed acts of devotion (observations) which they observe." (Surah Al-Hajj, XXII, 67); and, "For every one of you did We appoint a law and a way; and if Allah had pleased, He would have made you (all) a single people. But that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another [as in a race] to hasten to virtuous deeds. To Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed." (Surah Al-Maydah, V, 48).

Another matter I wish to suggest to Africans endowed with an appreciative spirit for art and culture. The native African heritage of myths and legends and tales should be retold for the African and for Humanity outside, laying stress on their aesthetic as well as moral appeal. The pantheon of West Africa in its cosmic as well as human aspects, which embraces the religious thought of most of West Africa, and that of the Bantu peoples, for instance, should be made a subject for collection, investigation and popularization, not only through the cultural organizations but also through schools. The highest ideals of the race frequently come out in its imaginative interpretations—its ideals of character and behaviour, as set forth in its

mythology and romance. There is no reason why African myths with their cosmic as well as human implications should not be a perennial source of joy and exaltation, not only for the African men and women, but also for people outside Africa. This will be for a rehabilitation of Africa in one of its most characteristic and significant domains of creation, and will be a source of strength and inspiration for the people of the continent, as much as Hindu or Buddhist, Christian or Muslim myths and legends and hero-tales as well as stories of saints and angels and devotees, are for Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and Muslim peoples. An African Christian or Muslim can remain a pious and sincere follower of his faith, and yet at the same time derive all the pleasure and even spiritual exaltation from his native social heritage, as much as a European Christian can derive aesthetic, emotional and even spiritual exaltation from a study of the deeper things of Greek or Germanic or Celtic myth and legend and romance. By the revival of African painting and sculpture, this matter may be further supported and advanced, for the benefit of Africa and the World.

Africa's Needs for Recovery of her Personality : Literacy  
and Education, and Study of her own History and  
Civilization

Africa, like many other parts of the world including certain wide tracts of Asia and South America, lacks that essential tool for the intellectual uplift of a modern people, namely Literacy. Of course, in a self-contained society where people have already formed their own philosophy of life and where life is more or less steady, there can be (and there has been) a high degree of Culture without Literacy. The *Ramayana* or the Bible, the *Analects* of Confucius or the *Quran* of the Prophet Muhammad are

not enough now in an age and society where there are so many complexities and so many cross-currents, not only in ideologies but also in politics, and in the desire of certain sections, with all their grandiloquent claims, to dominate over the rest. This is the bane of modern life, and no ism is free from that, when it has become blended with vested interests and with organized efforts to herd masses of human beings in special ideological camps, political, religious or economical.

Mankind everywhere is bewildered, and the only peace and happiness man is to get out of this bewilderment, and to see things in their own proper light, is by cultivating (if he is permitted to do so) his own intellect and judgment. That can only be done through a certain amount of reading and thinking for himself, and seeing things with his own eyes, and understanding without guidance from interested quarters. There must be the fullest freedom for the individual to read and know and think, and the crushing of intellectual freedom by regimentation of thinking must be avoided at all costs. Africa has pinned her faith on Democracy functioning without coercion. For the attainment of her personality to the fullest, she must guard the sanctity of the individual, and guarantee to her people free flow of thought and ideas, and guard herself against the intellectual heresy of propagating an infallible doctrine in any wake of life—material, intellectual and spiritual.

Initiation into reading and writing in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom by a widespread literacy campaign is one of the first requisites of modern life for an educationally backward people. Therefore, with a view to developing the mind and culture of Africa, as of other educationally backward countries, one of the most urgent problems is the Removal of Illiteracy. Speaking about Africa, as one of the first needs of the people this should be most widely attempted. But in Africa there



are certain problems (which however are not peculiar to Africa alone) which seem to stand as a bar to quick progress.

### Multilingual Africa : the Value of English

One such problem is the multiplicity of languages and dialects. The horizon of man everywhere is widening, and in a multilingual country where scores or even hundreds of speeches are jostling with each other within a limited area, there is not much chance for the smaller languages, particularly when they are confronted by some big language. In a multilingual country like the Soviet Union, they have sought to solve the problem by making Russian, the natural culture-language and language of higher education in both the sciences and the humanities, a compulsory subject for all Soviet citizens in the different republics. But everywhere people are officially permitted and encouraged to study and cultivate their own languages, small or great. Nevertheless, they have all got to learn Russian ; and that is bringing in a great bond of union, culturally, politically and socially. The position of Russian in the Soviet Union is analogous to that of English in India and in the other countries of the British Empire ; and although the Soviet Union has stepped into the place of the old Czarist Empire, the role of the Russian language continues to be the same, or perhaps much greater than before. In India too, although the British have quit the country, the role of the English language, in the interest of the Indians themselves, who do not possess a Modern Indian Language claiming the spontaneous homage of all groups and able like English to act as a gate-way to all creative modern thought and knowledge, is still very important, and quite indispensable. But we have in India great languages which are spoken by millions and millions of people ; and in the Indian Constitution, the Classical Language Sanskrit and 13 other languages, most

of which are now spoken by over 10 millions of people, have been given recognition ; and possibly a few more will have to be added (these were left out because they are now under the domination of one or the other of the 13 Recognized Modern Languages). In Africa, we have in most of the countries a multiplicity of languages. But in a particular area, we have groups of speeches which are related to each other, and which can, with a little conscious effort, find a common literary expression ; and this would give a respectable number of people who could come within the fold of this common literary language. The speech which in a particular area of undeveloped languages has made some progress naturally is becoming accepted by others who find it convenient, and who also do not have much difficulty in understanding it. Thus in Ghana, there is a great attempt at developing the local languages, as much as in Nigeria. But the group of dialects coming under the great Akan family (which is current in Central and Southern Ghana, as well as in the contiguous districts in French Ivory Coast in the West, and in Togoland in the East) can have a common literary speech in Twi-Fante, and that would bring within one single big language some four to five millions of people. The Yorubas of West Nigeria and the Igbos of East Nigeria are two peoples, each of which would appear to come up to over five millions ; and if we take some of the closely related contiguous dialects and bring them within the orbit of these two languages, the number for each would be still greater. The Hausa similarly is a great language of Northern Nigeria and the tracts to the West of it. Languages which are current among groups numbering over a million should be helped to develop themselves, without prejudice to the speakers of languages current among smaller groups. It would appear that by the natural law of convenience and selection, the multiplicity of dialects and languages will ere long dissolve itself considerably in

Africa ; and we can look forward to having, in due time, from 25 to 30 recognized languages for the whole of Black Africa, in the place of the hundreds which are now being studied and classified. The case of a very wide-spread language like Swahili in East Africa is interesting. For each regional area as a well-defined linguistic unit, linguistic scholars should weigh the question with local leaders and local educationists, and seek to solve the problem of the multiplicity of languages.

We can think of these great languages of Black Africa as requiring support on their own rights and merits, from this point in view :

*Hausa*, which is current among near about 10 millions ;

*Swahili*, over 8 millions ;

*Fula*, scattered over a wide tract along the Niger Valley,  
over 5 millions ;

*Yoruba* and *Igbo*, each over 5 millions ;

*Akan* (*Twi-Fante*), near about 3 millions ;

*Mandingo* in its various dialects (under two chief groups—*Mande Tan* and *Mande Fu*), throughout French West Africa and Guinea and Liberia, near about 3.50 millions ;

*Kanuri* speeches, over 1.67 millions ; and

*Mossi*, some 1.62 millions (these last two are undeveloped speeches, as yet without any literary form) ;

*Ruanda*, over 5 millions ;

*Luba* dialects of Congo and Northern Rhodesia, near about 3.50 millions ;

*Zulu*, over 2.50 millions ;

*Xhosa*, near about 2.50 millions ;

*Umbundu*, near about 2 millions ;

*Shona* dialects, over 1.55 millions ;

*Rundi*, over 1.50 millions ;

*Pangwe* speech, 1.35 millions ;

*Congo* dialects, over 1.20 millions ;

*Makua*, over 1 million :

*Ganda*, *Kimbundu*, *Nyamwezi-Sukuma*, each over a million ;

*Nyanja*, nearly a million ;

*Nubian* dialects, near about 1 million.

There are other languages which come below the one-million mark, and as their speakers, when they are in touch with other peoples, are generally bi-lingual, they should not present any great difficulty.

So long as there is no greater sense of linguistic consciousness combined with a desire for unity, and so long as the language-problem is not attempted to be tackled by the Africans themselves, English will be exceedingly convenient to be continued where it is in use, and also introduced where it is not yet current, as the common language of education and administration, if not for the self-expression of African peoples through literature and the humanities. As said before, for the removal of illiteracy we should take recourse to the mother-tongue, or to a particular language accepted as the cultural language of the area—e. g. one or the other of the greater languages mentioned above. There should be an intensive campaign for that throughout the whole of Africa, and already such African peoples as have been able to control their destiny to a large extent (as for example in Sierra Leone and Ghana and Nigeria) have begun a most laudable effort to liquidate illiteracy through a knowledge of reading and writing in the mother-tongue or in the accepted culture-language, and to lead also to a study of English as indispensable for higher education and culture.

We must all appreciate the importance of English in an educationally backward and multilingual country like Africa ; and there cannot be any question of eschewing English entirely in favour of the local languages, at least for the present. French of course is also of very great help

to large sections of Africans. But everywhere people are moving towards English as the One Language for a Single World Culture and One Federation of Peoples. Even in those areas where French reigned or still reigns supreme, English is making headway—as, for example, in Indo-China, i. e. Cambodia, Laos and Viet-nam, and also in West and North Africa; and for the matter of that, English is now studied to a much greater extent in France itself than it used to be before.

#### Some Final Observations relating to African Education and Culture

There should of course be an encouragement to develop literature in the representative languages of Africa. For this purpose, and specially for bringing in modern science and the humanities, scientific and technical terms have to be devised in African languages. I was agreeably surprised to find how in the various languages of Ghana, like the Akan dialects (Asante-Twi, Fante), and in Gan and Ewhe, scholars, who understand the basic differences between the structure of these African languages and English, are preparing grammatical technical terms which explain admirably the nature of these languages of Africa for helping native African speakers. Wherever a thought-process is involved, it will be worth while trying to draw upon the resources of the native language to the fullest; and for the names of new ideas, which are universal and not distinctive, the native speech should be also taken recourse to. But where names of new objects and new processes are involved, and also of ideas which have a special connotation, it will be helpful for all to have international words.

In teaching the various subjects for school and college education, the method in Africa should be the same as in

other advanced countries. In India, too, we are using in our high schools and colleges a bilingual jargon for the teaching of science and some of the humanities subjects as well, even when there is an attempt, for patriotic reasons, to abandon or restrict English. In China and Japan too, particularly in science, English has been found to be, to say the least, most useful: witness the large number of American text-books on science which have been printed in China in recent years for the benefit of students and teachers who read English.

The use of English will also be inevitable in Africa. But in any scheme of education, special emphasis should be laid on African History and on the Culture of the African Peoples, on a background of World History and World Culture. There should be investigation and research, with the help of Anthropologists, Sociologists and Artists, with a view to re-discover and re-state the African point of view in culture, bringing out its value to the peoples of Africa in the first instance and to the outside world in addition. In a study of universal history, the main trends should be emphasized and taught, from the most ancient times, with as much stress on Africa, Asia and pre-Columban America as possible—studying of course also Europe and latter-day America.

In any system of education, specially in a multi-religious country where people of different faiths have to live together amicably, there should be a total ban on denominational religious instruction involving the rites and dogmas of particular cults, whether Pagan (i.e. Native African), or Christian, or Muhammadan. But moral and ethical instruction on a universal basis, and a knowledge of the basic ideas of these three groups of religions, should with advantage form a part of general education. The interpretation of African religion and culture should be made by disinterested scientists, in collaboration with those

who still follow it or have a respect for it ; just as the point of view of the other religions current in Africa, like Islam, and Christianity in its different branches, should be from scholars who follow these religions and have faith in their highest and all-inclusive humane ideals.

For the study of the culture of Black Africa, ample provision should be made in the Universities through the departments of Anthropology, Ethnology and Sociology and Linguistics, and of Art and History. Collection of African historical and other traditions, myths, cults and religion, folk-literature and religious literature, folk-lore and folk-ways as well as social and political customs and usages, and the *rationale* behind them, should be taken in hand ; and for this purpose teams of workers should be trained. The lines of research presented by the *Institute of African Studies* in England, and similar other Institutions elsewhere, will in the first instance give some kind of model for new workers in Africa ; and then the application of their findings for the cultural rehabilitation of the African peoples could be really helpful.

In this connexion, it may be said that there is a need for slogans and for symbols connected with the African peoples' past, as something very vital for the restoration of a sense of their culture and for the building up of the Personality of Black Africa. Symbols have a high place in African religion and art, and there should not be any difficulty in finding out some suitable symbols for both regional and all-African use, to connote certain vital ideas and conceptions as well as aspirations for the good of the people and their intellectual and spiritual uplift. The people of Ghana have a number of very expressive and artistic symbols in their religious ritual and art, and so also the Yorubas and other peoples of Nigeria. This is sure to form a very fascinating subject of study and enquiry, and the findings of a historical and archæological as well as artistic

enquiry are bound to be of help to African nationalism and solidarity.

In the work of cultural rehabilitation, the African social system, wherever it could be of help to the people in their economic and corporate life, should be supported ; and African ways of life, when they conduce to good and moral existence for both the individual and society, and to the joy of life, should be fully encouraged. On the basis of existing African achievement in art (sculpture in wood and bronze, terracotta, paintings) and the handicrafts (textiles and regional costumes), music (singing, drum-music and music of various other instruments), dance etc., the movement should be kept going, and all these things are to be made to have once again their legitimate place in the life of the African. We may note in this context how in Congo an African drum-orchestra has been adapted to the Roman Catholic Church Service, and how African wood-carving and metal-work have taken up Christian subjects and have been used in objects of Christian ritual—just as the clay architecture of the upper Niger Valley in West Africa has given rise to a distinctive and even an imposing style in the mosques and other buildings in places like Timbuctoo, Jenne, Segu, Bamako, Katsina and Kano. The various tribal and regional types of culture can be expanded and lifted up to something which would be more or less national for a wide area, and even pan-African.

To achieve this end, detailed programmes can be very well drawn up with the help of experts ; and in the African States where the people are now free, or where they are on the way to freedom, attempts must be made to try to implement them in the interest of both the African Peoples as well as of Mankind as a whole.



## THE CULTURE AND RELIGION OF THE YORUBAS OF WEST AFRICA

It was in 1919, in the month of September, that I arrived in London for my two years' stay and study there. As soon as I had settled down in my student lodgings, I went to see the various collections in that wonderful treasure-house of objects of antiquarian, historical, anthropological and artistic interest, the British Museum of London. In this all-embracing institution, housing specimens of the handiwork of man in all ages and all climes, I was enabled to form an acquaintance, quite unexpectedly, with a collection of objects about which I had previously not the slightest idea—viz., objects illustrating the art of the Negro peoples of West Africa. As a student of language, however, I had only some general notion of the linguistic classification of the African peoples, like the Hamites, the "True Negroes", the "Bantu Negroes", and the Bushmen and Hottentots. But like most people in India and elsewhere, I used to think that the Negroes of Africa were a savage and barbarous people, and they had nothing of civilization and art, of thought and religion of any high order, comparable with what we find among civilized peoples. But after I had seen a series of artifacts produced by Negroes of the city state of Benin in South Nigeria in West Africa—bronze heads, images, and groups of figures in bronze, bronze plaques with reliefs of human figures and animals and birds, figures and plaquettes in ivory, caskets and other ivory objects—my eyes were opened up to a new and a strange world of beauty, the strangeness and the unexpectedness of the type of artistic expression lending it an extra charm which was not merely the charm of novelty. My curiosity in Africa, and particularly in West Africa,

was awakened ; and whatever was easily available, in the library of the British Museum and elsewhere, I began to read with avidity, to form some idea of the cultural *milieu* in which the remarkable art of Benin was born. I was in this way enabled to learn something about the various peoples of Africa, and their religion, culture, and art, and visualize them in their proper atmosphere. I noted with pleasure that the successful achievement and the abiding beauty of the attempts at self-expression in the field of plastic art, which the primitive African peoples had made, had already been discovered by the artists and art-critics of Europe who had a sensitiveness to all great Art. I gradually realized that the peculiar and noteworthy expression of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, which has taken place through the religion, culture, and art which evolved in the life of the various 'primitive' peoples of Africa, was quite acceptable to sympathetic and appreciative spirits among humanity at large.

What the primitive peoples of Africa had built up, working under various and peculiarly adverse circumstances, could show, as among all other peoples, much that was good and beautiful and worthy of the sincere appreciation of man, side by side with certain things which were cruel and ugly, foolish and shameful. What should be a matter for general congratulation is that the peoples of Africa, so long remaining such a long way behind the civilized races, are now slowly coming to realize that they too have contributed something which is worth preserving ; and they are feeling that they should not always consider themselves as eternally backward and helpless, and condemned for ever to drag on an ignominious existence on scraps from Europe's feast of culture. It must be admitted that the eye of the intelligent African is at last opening up, and a true spiritual awakening is taking place for him through the influence of the cultured mind of Europe—

the mind of Europe which understands, and seeks for the truth, and is liberal and human in its outlook. The Africans, as a result of this, will be able to free themselves of a sense of inferiority which is now sitting on them as an incubus ; they will learn to judge their own culture with proper sympathy and understanding, freeing themselves from the excessive awe with which they were accustomed to look upon the European organization and culture brought to them by the Christian missionary, and upon the over-whelming might of the machine-made civilization of Europe. They will not then feel so very humiliated at the poverty of their primitive life, when they understand it in its proper context. This growing change of mental outlook is certainly a bit of good news, not only for the Black Man of Africa alone, but for the whole of Humanity.

I came to form some idea of African art and culture during my two years' stay in England (1919-1921) ; and then subsequently, in 1922, 1935 and 1938, I was enabled to visit some well-known centres of African art in the museums of the Continent. During my stay in London as a student, I formed the acquaintance of some African (Negro) gentlemen who were also sojourning there, and through this contact with them it was possible for me to know a little more intimately about some aspects of African life and ways, ideas and ideals ; and this knowledge helped to create in my mind a great sense of respect for the African and his native culture.

In the whole of Africa, peoples belonging to no less than seven distinct types of speech and culture form the native inhabitants. These are (1) the Semitic, (2) the Hamitic, (3) the Bushman, (4) the Hottentot, (5) the Bantu Negro, (6) the Sudanian or Pure Negro, and (7) the Pygmy Negro or Negrito. Of these seven groups, the Semitic and the Hamitic are closely related to each other—in language, if not always in race : the Semitic and the Hamitic

languages are believed to belong to a common Semitic-Hamitic family, from which these two branches separated in pre-historic times. The Hamites appear to have been living in the whole of Northern (Mediterranean) Africa since time immemorial; the people of Egypt who built up her ancient civilization were Hamites. The Berber tribes of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco (like the Kabyles, for instance), the Tuaregs of the Sahara, and the Somalis and Gallas of Eastern Africa—these are also Hamites, and thus kinsmen of the ancient Egyptians. The Hamites belong to the white race. The Semites originally did not belong to Africa. Their homelands were Syria and Arabia, and they had quite early settled in Babylonia and Assyria. From South Arabia, Semitic colonists came and settled in Ethiopia or Abyssinia, where they brought their language; and groups of Semites from Syria and Palestine also made settlements in Egypt in very ancient times. They were able to modify the life and culture of their linguistic kinsmen, the Hamites of North Africa, most profoundly; particularly in post-Islamic times, when the Arabs, in the course of the last thousand years, established their Muslim religion and their Arabic language all over North and Central Africa. From the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, the Arabs have created a new Arab world where Islam with the language and the culture of Arabia reigns supreme, even though the local languages of North-West Africa and the Sahara still persist. The Semitic and Hamitic peoples who both belong to the white race have no genetic relationship with Black Africa—the two groups originally were distinct. In considering African Africa, or Negro Africa, the Semitic-Hamitic peoples have no place, except as a strong solvent force from the outside. In South Sahara and West Sudan (along the upper course of the Niger river particularly), there has been a great intermixture of the Hamites from the Sahara and the North with the local True Negroes, and

this has led to some new mixed tribes or peoples, like the Hausa of Northern Nigeria, and the Fulani, Fulbe, or Peul (Pol) of French West Africa, who form very well-organized and advanced African nations ; and similarly in East Africa, among the Swahili and other Bantu-speaking Negroes, there has been a certain amount of Arab influence. Peoples of mixed origin like the Kanuri, the Fulani and the Hausa, and the Swahili, are true Africans nevertheless, although they lack the interest that is attached to the True Negroes and the purer Bantu tribes : and as these have accepted Islam some centuries ago, they have, in matters purely cultural, largely passed out of the circle of true or native or Black Africa.

The Bushmen and Hottentot peoples are related to each other, linguistically and racially, very much like the Semites and the Hamites. These live in South Africa : they belong to a race quite distinct from the Negro race, which is found in its two main branches. Bushman and Hottentot culture has always been at a very low level, although the ancestors of these peoples showed some artistic powers in ancient times in their cave-paintings ; but they are not considered in discussing purely Negro culture. The Pygmies are a kind of very short-statured Negroes who have no real culture of their own—they are in a very low scale of civilization. These Pygmies are found in the dense forest regions of Congo State, and they have been influenced even in language by their neighbours, the Bantu peoples. Their cultural *milieu* is also quite distinct from that of the Negroes proper.

The Black People of Africa, forming the distinctive people of the 'Black Continent', fall into two broad groups, not considering some important local variations in Central Africa, Central Sahara, and East Sahara—(a) the Bantu Africans of Central and Southern Africa, and (b) the Sudanic Africans (or True Negroes) of Western and North

Central Africa. As they belong to the same race, there are certain fundamental agreements between these two groups in physical appearance, in character and temperament, and in general cultural *milieu*, including social organization. But nevertheless, these two groups show a good deal of contrast in certain other matters—e. g., in language, in some religious notions and usages, and in social life and customs.

The Sudanic or True Negroes of West Africa are in a way the best representatives of the black peoples of Africa. These Sudanic Africans, considering their languages and their past history (Sudanic African languages bear a general family likeness among themselves), are conveniently divided into a number of tribes. Of these tribes, the following are the most important, in West Africa: the Nupes of Central Nigeria, and the Igbos or the Ibos and Yorubas of Southern Nigeria (respectively East and West Southern Nigeria); the great group of Chwi or Twi tribes in British Gold Coast colony, now Ghana; the Gan and the Ewhe of Togoland; the Fon of Dahomey; and the Baule, the Vai, the Mandingo, the Mossi, the Bambara, the Songhoi, the Senufo, the Wolof, and other tribes of French West Africa. The Yoruba people of Nigeria (closely related to whom is the Bini tribe of the city of Benin in South Nigeria, who were one of the most artistic peoples of Africa, famous for their bronze statuary and plaques, their ivories and their wood-carving), and the Akans of Gold Coast are two of the most intelligent and most advanced peoples of West Africa, being quite note-worthy in physical appearance, in cleverness, and in enterprise; these, and the Baganda people of Uganda in East Africa, who are a Bantu people, represent the very high level of modern African Africa, and in intelligence and adaptability to modern culture, as well as in their stable social organization, they have shown themselves to be quite capable of holding their own before Europeans even.

The African gentlemen whose acquaintance and friendship I made in London during my student days in 1919-21 were all Yorubas, and one of them was an Ashanti. A little point in nomenclature may be mentioned here as something quite *a propos*. Educated Negroes of Africa are never ashamed to refer to themselves as 'Black Men'; but they do not like to use the term 'Negro' for themselves, because of the English corruption of the word, 'nigger', being used in abuse only—although the source—from of both 'Negro' and 'nigger', viz., the Latin word, 'niger', just means 'black'. They prefer the word 'African', and Europeans and others who are sympathetic and who do not want to give offence also use the term 'African'. In the same way, the Malay peoples of the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) take pride in designating themselves as 'Indonesians', and not by their tribal or local names. The names 'Africa' and 'African' have become, so to say, symbols of a newly awakened Negro or Black African consciousness. From these Yoruba friends of mine I came to know that the Yorubas formed quite a nation—they numbered three millions, of whom a third were Christians, another third Muslims, and the remaining third were followers of their old African 'pagan' religion. The people are singularly free from religious quarrels, and conversion either to Islam or to Christianity is purely voluntary; but there is a certain amount of resistance offered to the new faiths by the old religion, the traditions of which are still quite strong. The Gods of the old religion of the Yorubas still receive worship from the people, in what may be described as public shrines or temples (in certain places these are considered specially sacred), and in the family shrines of house-holders. The Yorubas live mainly by agriculture, and they raise cereals like rice and maize, and above all, the yam, which is their staff of life, and palm-oil and peanuts for both home consumption and

export, besides cocoa and cotton as well as mahogany wood for export. They are now fairly prosperous ; and the Yoruba country is densely populated. The land-holders and farmers appear to be quite well off. There are some fairly biggish towns in Yorubaland—e. g. Lagos, the sea-port town and capital of Nigeria (with more than 150,000 inhabitants), Ibadan (about 250,000 people), Ogbemosho (90,000), Ilorin ( 85,000 ), Abeokuta, and Ife, (each over 55,000) ; and in addition to these, there are several other towns with populations ranging from thirty to fifty thousand. In these towns, they have their old chiefs, some Christian, some Muslim, and others following the national religion ; and they carry on the affairs of these considerable settlements in their old way, and are eager to adopt whatever in the European system would appear to be helpful or better for them. The city of Ife is the centre of their religious life. To the west of Yorubaland are the countries of Dahomey (inhabited by the Fon people), and Togo, and further to the west is Ghana (formerly the Colony of Gold Coast), the home of the Akans. The economic condition of the people of these parts is quite satisfactory, so far, like that of the Yorubas.

In 1920, while in London, I came to know a Yoruba student from Lagos named Nathaniel Akinremi Fadipe (or Fadikpe). Eighteen years later I was enabled to see him again in London in 1938. (I feel very sad to mention that he has since joined the majority—he was quite a well-known and popular figure among his people.) When I met him first, I asked him the meaning of his name, or surname. He said that the word 'Fadikpe' was composed of three elements—'Ifa-di-kpe', which meant 'the Gift of the God Ifa'. I asked him about his old African religion from which evidently he had got his family name. Fadikpe was himself a Christian, but I was pleased to find that he had no contempt for the old religion of his people.



He told me about the God Ifa that this particular divinity was associated with prophecy and foretelling, and the centre of his worship was the city of Ife, where his priests used to tell the future with the help of sixteen palm-nuts from a special kind of palm-tree—the priests throw the nuts on a round or oblong tray of wood carved with figures, and they calculate how many nuts fall on the tray or remain in hand, by drawing lines sixteen times on the tray, and in this way seek to interpret the mind of the God regarding the matter in hand. I had an impression from Fadikpe's talk that he had a sort of faith in the efficacy and truth of this kind of prophecy, but he explained to me that he was born in a Christian family and so he did not know much about the old religion, which was still a living faith with about a million of his people.

Later on I met a Muslim Yoruba prince or chief, Chief Oluwa, who was one of the twelve 'white cap' chiefs of Southern Yorubaland. This chief had come to London in connexion with a law-suit with the English Government in Nigeria, about certain landed properties near Lagos which the Government had taken over from him without paying anything and over which the chief claimed he had rights. (I was glad to find that finally the chief won his case.) The chief was a dignified old man, in his loose black and white robes of an Arab style. His son accompanied him, and he was a handsome young man, looking splendid (when I had occasion to see him in his residence) in a blue cloak, stamped with many coloured desigas, worn toga-fashion exposing his right shoulder and forearm with the biceps of an athlete, and with leather sandals on his feet—quite the figure of an ebony statue in the classical style. Another person who came with the chief was a Yoruba compatriot of his, a gentleman of the name of Herbert Macaulay, who acted as the chief's secretary and interpreter and was the manager in his case. The name was British, but Mr.

Macaulay was a true African patriot, in spite of his British name and his immaculate English suit. He was a man of education and culture, and had taken his degree in engineering in a British university, and he was a well-known citizen of Lagos and a leader of his people. Mr. Macaulay's maternal grandfather was Bishop Crowther, the first full-blooded African to be consecrated a bishop of the Anglican Church. When a small boy, Bishop Crowther was rescued by the British navy from the alavers in West Africa, and taken to England to be educated. He naturally became a Christian, and then he was consecrated as a clergyman of the Church of England and sent out as a missionary among his own people. I could learn a good deal from Mr. Macaulay about Yoruba society and way of life. A Yoruba clergyman had written a book, originally in the Yoruba language (the Yoruba speech had no writing, and the Roman script was adapted for it by the Christian missionaries), on Yoruba Paganism, and this book was translated into English. Mr. Macaulay had brought a copy with him to England, and he lent it to me. I was very pleased with the book, as the author was trying to make his countrymen take sympathetic interest in the pre-Christian religion of the Yorubas. This Yoruba-speaking *padre* compared Yoruba 'heathenism' with Greek or Roman 'heathenism', and he made it clear to his people that their ancestors were heathen or pagan in the same way that those of the present-day Christian English were heathen or pagan.

There are a good many educated chiefs, and other cultured men among the Yorubas, some of them were with European education. But they were not a bit ashamed because of their old religion, and some of them were quite anxious to preserve it, or to justify it, and to explain its *rationale* as far as they could do it. This sense of pride in their religion as a basis of their culture, and this

conservatism certainly formed a refreshing expression of the robust mentality of this section of the people of Africa.

This sense of pride and intelligent appreciation of their own religion and culture appears to be manifesting itself among the Yorubas and their neighbours and kinsmen—particularly among the Twi or Chwi tribes, like the Ashantis. The towns of Kumasi and Accra are the political and cultural centres of the Ashantis. Among the Yorubas, Muslims, and Pagans, as well as some Christian and Europeanized people, do not wear the tight-fitting clothes of the Europeans; rather they affect loose drawers with a loose tunic, and a cape-like outer garment, which is a dress quite suitable for the hot climate of the country. The Akans have still kept up their very beautiful native African dress, from the chiefs downwards. They still wrap a beautiful-looking cloak like the Roman toga round their bodies (the cloak is made up of pieces of woven stuff in many colours, or of stamped and dyed cloth, with peculiar native African patterns in colour), and wear their sandals of a classical shape; and big gold rings and head-fillets and chains of native Akan workmanship offer a beautiful harmony of colour, gold and red and blue against the smooth black skins of the wearers.

Some years ago, a Congress of Religions was held in some town in America—probably it was in Chicago. It was not on such a grand scale as the historic Congress of Religions which was held there in 1893, when the announcement, by Swami Vivekananda (of illustrious memory), of the ideals of Hinduism before a concourse of nations was the most important event. In this more recent Congress, as usual, representatives of different religions and peoples came and spoke. From a list of the names of people who were to come and speak for the different religions at this Conference (I regret I did not take down

the necessary reference), I found that there was the name of an Ashanti gentleman—he was to be present in America all the way from Kumasi in Gold Coast in West Africa, and to take his place in the gathering, among speakers on behalf of the better known or international religions, and to proclaim the ideals of his own African religion, his African 'paganism' as it had developed among the Ashantis, as something which could be placed before civilized humanity and which in his opinion was entitled to its sympathetic and respectful consideration, and possibly, acceptance.

All lovers of Man, with a fellow-feeling for the backward and exploited peoples, will realize the significance of this little event, which symbolized the resurgence of the national self-respect of an unknown and unrenowned African people who had been denied, by force of circumstance, to rise to the full height of their being and to make their proper contribution to the corporate culture of man. We do not know anything about the religion of the Ashantis—what are its philosophical bases, and its spiritual realization. It has been always blazoned forth before the world that the Africans following this and similar 'pagan' religions were in the habit of offering human sacrifices, and in their mental and spiritual life they were quite a depraved lot, who required an aggressive and drastic form of Christianity and Europeanization to bring them up to something like a civilized level. The fact of human sacrifice in certain forms of African Negro religion has not been denied, and cannot be denied; but it can be said, as a general statement, that there has been a good deal of propaganda, conscious or unconscious, against the moral and spiritual life of these peoples and their mental capacities, patent and latent,—a propaganda which is very largely the result of an intolerance due to an incapacity to understand primitive peoples whose life did not conform

to British and other European Christian standards, and was also based on a desire to exploit a helpless people.

I shall say something about the moral life of the Yorubas (these conditions also hold good in the case of other African tribes or nations similarly situated) which will show how unjust and false conceptions are spread about backward peoples who have no means of defending themselves. The Yoruba gentleman mentioned above, Mr. Herbert Macaulay, once told me, in course of conversation: "See, Mr. Chatterji, the peoples of Europe have nothing but contempt for us as we are black men, uncivilized dwellers in forests, and rude barbarians in front of the cultured white peoples of Europe. They send missionaries to us to 'civilize' us and to 'improve' our morality and our life. But the truth is, they destroy the bases of our old morality and old culture when they seek to destroy ruthlessly all our old ways. The life that old-fashioned Africans followed in the olden days, the life traditionally received from their fathers and grand-fathers, was certainly not a life of advanced civilization, but there was no place in it, generally, for thieves and liars and for those who were enemies of public well-being. Even to-day the people of our villages have not wholly given up this old-fashioned adherence to truth. In our country, the village or the country-side is known in English as the 'bush'. We have a number of main roads going through the 'bush' i.e. through villages, fields, and wooded tracts. There is generally a scarcity of water—we do not have many wells, and 'water-holes' or ponds and tanks are also few. Neither is there any proper system of inns or lodging-houses, or shops and resting-places. Early in the morning, a woman from a village would come to the main road, a few miles away, with a bunch of coco-nuts and another bunch of plantains, as well as an earthen jar of water. These she would put down in the shade of some big tree

by the way-side, and in the coconut-shell cup covering the water-jar she would put three little stones ; near the bunch of plantains, two stones ; and similarly near the bunch of coco-nuts, five or seven stones. Arranging everything in this way, she would go back home to her village. The idea was that way-farers along the high road would sit down in the shade of the tree to rest, and if they wanted they could buy a drink of water in the coconut-shell cup from the water-jar for three cowries only—in our country cowrie-shells are still in use as small currency—and could have a plantain from the bunch for the two cowries, and a coco-nut for five or seven cowries. In the evening, the owner of the water and fruits would come from the village, and she would find so many cowries for so much water taken by her unseen customers, and for so many plantains and coco-nuts, and would find her accounts squared up, and go back home perfectly content with her takings and her water-jar and the remaining fruits if any. There is no non-payment, and no thieving of the unguarded fruits and water and the cowries in this kind of buying and selling without the seller being present. On the whole, this kind of old honesty largely persists. But the contagion of 'civilization' has already started its evil work in some parts of the country."

Mr. Macaulay further said : "You see, we had all along in our society certain strict rules of life and discipline, and there was the tremendous force of public opinion. People could not do whatever they liked in matters affecting the community as a whole. Now they can do it, for, under the law of the white man, no one can prevent them. But we had formerly a good many 'good forms', and on the whole that was beneficent for our society. Take, for example, marriage. A young man sees a marriageable girl in some festival, or in the weekly or daily market, and wishes to marry her. He talks to his friends, and one of them

informs the young man's grandfather or grandmother or some similar relation. Then, if the family of the girl is respectable, the parents of the young man would send a proposal for the marriage by means of a professional go-between or match-maker. After that, there would be a secret enquiry from either side—whether any ancestor of the boy or the girl ever had one of these three dreaded diseases—syphilis, leprosy, or lunacy. When both families passed this enquiry, marriages in respectable African families could only then take place." It must be admitted that a people, whose personal and social morality and organization had developed in this way, were certainly in possession of a high culture, although they had not been able to create a great architecture or art, or to make contributions to science, and thought, or even to produce any noteworthy literature.

The religion and thought which take shape among a particular people depend upon the following things—its basic nature or character, its material environment, its economic life and means of livelihood, and the time it can devote to serious and to beautiful things after meeting the elemental demands of hunger and safety ; and it depends also on contact with other races with a distinct and a superior culture. The Africans of West Africa along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea do not appear to have had much to do with a cultured foreign people before they came in touch with the Portuguese some 450 years ago, when the Portuguese first came there for trade and for finding a new sea-route to India. Before that, some influence from the Mediterranean area—from the Egyptian and Greco-Roman and later Islamic-Arab cultures—may have trickled down to these peoples along two routes, from the North along the Sahara caravan tracks, and from the East, from Egypt, through Nubia and Sudan. Some Portuguese influence is also seen in the art of West Africa,

unless it was really Egyptian and not Portuguese. But Portuguese influences on West African religion do not seem to have been effective at all. Definite Muslim influence was operative in the Upper Niger regions long before the European domination of the coast lands, through Arab and Berber and Islamized Upper Nigerian traders like the Fulani and the Hausas. But long before that, the West Africans had built up their special religious world, with its bases of speculation and ritual, its mythology and cults, its priesthood and its festivals—as we can judge from ancient cult-objects and from ancient traditions about religion, although some of these cult-objects have been discovered only in recent years. Consequently we are entitled to look upon the religion of the West African Yorubas and allied tribes as an independent creation of a mature African mind and an advanced African society in a specific African world. The religious notions and ritualistic practices which we see among the West African tribes that are still largely 'pagan', like the Nupe, the Igbo, the Yoruba, the Fon, the Gan, the Ewhe, the Akan, the Baule, and others, and in the remnants of pre-Muslim religion which still survive among the superficially Islamized tribes like the Mandingos, the Wolofs, the Mossi, the Bambara, and the Songhoi, present certain family likenesses, in spite of a number of inevitable local, tribal and linguistic divergences, as these had evolved within an identical geographical, economic and cultural atmosphere. Not having the competence for it, I shall not try to give a comparative study and estimate of the pagan world of West Africa, but I shall try to present the main points in the religion and mythology of one prominent West African people only—the Yorubas.

It seems more has been written on Yoruba religion and culture in English and other European language than on those of any other West African people ; and the Yorubas



themselves have contributed to this. The Yoruba religion may be taken as typical of that of West Africa as a whole. My facts I have obtained mostly from the books by Colonel A. B. Ellis, R. E. Dennett, Leo Frobenius, and Stephen S. Farrow, and some sidelights have been found from books on African Art. An English official in Nigeria, John Wyndham, was impressed by the Yoruba mythology while he was in Ife town, and in 1921 he brought out his "Myths of Ife" (London, Erskine Macdonald Ltd.), in which he retold the stories of the creation and of the Gods of the Yorubas in English blank verse, following closely the stories he heard from the *Babalowos*. I have also read "The Religion of the Yorubas" by the Venerable Archdeacon J. Olumide Lucas of Lagos (C. M. S. Bookshop, Lagos, 1948), but in this book the author goes in for too much theorising, and is eager always to connect Yoruba myths and notions with those of Ancient Egypt. It seems we must wait for Professor William R. Bascom's book to come out, before we can obtain a precise objective study of Yoruba religion and cults from a trained anthropologist from the U. S. A., who spent long months in Yorubaland studying the religion.

An elaborate series of Cults of different Gods, and an extensive Mythology—these are two of the most important expressions of a religion; and Yoruba religion shows quite a high development in these lines. A religion cannot spread among the masses or be acceptable to them if it does not feed their imagination by beautiful or passable legends and stories. But all peoples do not evince the high type of imagination or poetic faculty required in producing beautiful myths and legends, and many peoples are absolutely lacking in the proper aesthetic faculty. The pre-eminence of the Ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians, of the Greeks and Indians, and of the Celts and Germans in the myth-making faculty is not very common elsewhere.

Throughout the whole of Africa, after the Hamitic-speaking Egyptians of ancient times, the people of the Yoruba speech have shown the greatest achievement in evolving a finished system of mythology. We have a number of Gods and Goddesses, with personality and character, so to say, in Yoruba religion, and some noteworthy myths; and the Yoruba Gods are entitled to a distinctive place in the pantheon of all religions, because of their special character.

A very special type of art has grown up around these myths and legends, among the Yorubas proper and the tribes allied to them. This art has expressed itself in images and bas-reliefs, and in sculpture and modelling, in metal, ivory, wood, and terracotta, as well as in their pottery and wooden vessels. The wood-carvings of the Yorubas of the present day, and the bronzes of ancient Yorubaland and of the city of Benin, as well as as the ivories, besides modelling in clay, are specially to be mentioned. The place of this art is the highest in African Africa; and in its pure beauty and truth as a cultural expression, this West African Art can be said to be a *ktemn es aei*, "a possession for ever", for the whole of humanity.

A section of mankind which follows Judaism and the religions which are its offshoots, namely, Christianity and Islam, uses certain words of contempt for their fellow-beings who belong to religions other than these three, words which imply that God's truth is confined only to one or the other of these three religions, and none outside these knows or can even aspire to know this truth. A European word expressing this mentality, as it developed within Christianity, is *pagan* (and *paganism*): those who do not accept the authority of the Bible (or the Quran among the Muslims) are *pagans*. The word means 'belonging to the village or country-side, rustic', and then it came to imply the backwardness which is associated

with rustic life. Explaining the word differently, we may say that a religion which is not founded on the teachings or sayings of a single historic teacher who is regarded as inspired and infallible, and which has been since time immemorial naturally evolving as the expression of the mind, the heart and the actions of people living in a particular geographic, economic, and cultural area, is a *Natural Religion*—is a form of Paganism; and taking the word 'pagan' in this sense, we cannot object to its use. This Pagan Religion, in order to be raised to something acceptable for mankind in higher stages of evolution, must have a system (or systems) of thought linking it up with the Unseen Reality. This is what we see in all ancient Natural or Pagan Religions, as among the civilized peoples of antiquity like the Greeks, the Hindus, and the Chinese. Some time ago, Mrs. Savitri Mukherji, a highly cultured Greek lady, who has accepted the naturally evolved religion of India, Hinduism—our Indian Paganism—has written a very fine and thought-provoking book on Hindu culture and its preservation, "A Warning to the Hindus" (published from the Hindu Mission in Calcutta), and in this work she has in all seriousness and with fullest justification made a defence of Paganism (in the above sense) as the natural and proper religion of man. The Yoruba religion is a paganism of this type, bearing a family resemblance to ancient Greek or Chinese religion, and to Hinduism in its popular form.

Being unable to grasp the character or implications of the natural religion in its various forms as current among the peoples of Africa, and giving undue emphasis to one of its outward expressions, European writers at first gave it a name which is still commonly applied to it, namely, 'Fetishism'. Fetishism means faith in the magical powers of some object (a fetish), natural or man-made, and holding such an object as sacred as the mystic repository of some

supernatural power, and sometimes wearing it as a charm or amulet. Among many African peoples we see the custom of showing divine honour to a piece of stone, or seeds of a fruit, or a piece of cloth, or a figure of metal or wood, or a piece of bone, or a bunch of feathers, or to any other object, thinking it either naturally or through some ritual to be the abode of some special power. These fetishes are kept in temples ("fetish-houses"), and some are worn by priests and religious men or by ordinary lay people. But such a belief and practice is not confined to the 'rude and uncivilized' people of Africa alone. The belief in charms, amulets, talismans, and mascots, which are either kept in the home or are worn on the person, is quite extensive even in civilized Europe; and certain things in some forms of Christianity also belong to the same category, and are but objects of fetishism, although many people would not like to be told that; like, for example, holy relics, including bones and mummified bodies of saints. Consequently it will not be proper to describe the natural religion of Africa merely as Fetishism. Similarly, it cannot be described as "Animism", or a belief in certain objects possessing a spirit (or a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit) in them.

There is no quarrel among the various kinds of natural or pagan religion as they have evolved in different ages and among different peoples—they all have a mutual respect, and toleration for each other, and they hold themselves to be fellows in the same quest. Owing to a number of historical reasons, the tendency to regard itself as the only true religion, and consequently to have nothing but contempt for other religions as idolatry, showed itself in Judaism; and this attitude was inherited by Christianity and Islam—in some of their aspects at least. This attitude is responsible for what may be called *Religious Imperialism* or *Religious Totalitarianism*, which seeks to destroy all

other forms of religion or religious experience and to set up itself or its own ideas and practices in their place. The natural or pagan religions are free from this idea. Such an attitude, claiming all truth to itself, and looking upon itself as being exclusively linked up with God, can only be looked upon as a form of blasphemy. There is another matter to consider. In spite of a great many differences in their externals, a study of the various natural religions makes it clear that, notwithstanding their different formative *milieus*, mankind has, in the various climes and times, arrived independently at some general realizations of a fundamental character : e. g., the immanence of God in everything, and a realization of the Spirit that is behind all existence ; the realization that there is an Ultimate Truth which is beyond all perception, an Absolute Truth not capable of description and limitation by ascribing to it qualities ; that gods and goddesses are manifestations of this Ultimate Reality, manifestations conceived by imagination or faith ; and that it is possible for the spirit to be incarnated in the mundane world, as occasions would require.

Many of the ideas in natural religions all over the world show agreement with some of the basic things of the natural religion of India as summarized by her philosophy. But it would be only a kind of Chauvinism or Jingoism if we were to show our anxiety to trace Indian influences in such cases. 'My people is the greatest people of the world, and God has vouchsafed a special grace to my people, by making it the supreme leader or the supreme teacher of nations'—such an attitude is also a kind of blasphemy. Thus, in the conception of the Tao in China, we should not try to trace it to the Indian conception of the Brahman or the Supreme Spirit in its *nirguna* or attributeless and *saguna* or attributed aspects, or to the idea of Rita or the Eternal Law as something which directs the universe,

considering that there is no evidence of Indian and Chinese culture-contacts prior to the fourth century B. C. This conception had dawned in the mind of the Chinese *rishi* or inspired sage Lao-tze independently in the 7th-6th century B.C. When we look at the matter in this light, we realize the natural universality of a great spiritual idea. Similarly, certain great ideas of Sufism may have evolved independently among the Arabs and Persians, without any Indian or Greek influence.

The Yorubas believe in a divine power, something like our *nirguna* Brahman of Indian (Vedanta) philosophy—the Absolute without attributes. This Absolute Divinity they call *Olorun*. Most of the tribes of West Africa ( as well as of Bantu Africa ) have a similar belief, only they have different words in their various languages for the same attributeless or remote spiritual Being, the Ultimate Source and Repository of everything. The Akans call this spirit *Nyame-Nyankupon* or *Nyankupon*, 'Lord of the Sky' ; the Gans call it *Nyommo*, and the Ewhes, *Nawu*. The name *Olorun* means 'Lord of the Sky'. The Christians regard *Olorun* as the equivalent of Yahweh or Jehovah, and the Muslims as the same as their Allah. Yoruba Christians speak of the supreme Christian God as *Olorun*. Other names of *Olorun* express his greatness—e. g. *Eleda* (Creator), *Alaye* (Lord of Life), *Olodumare* (Almighty), *Olodumaye* (Self-created), *Elami* (Supreme Spirit), *Oga-Oga* (Very Great), and *Oluwa* (Master, Lord). Of course, the Yorubas have not arrived at a truly philosophic conception comparable to the Vedanta philosophy of India. But in *Olorun*, they have formulated the idea of a unique Divinity without a second, who is equally just, and judge of good and evil.

But this Supreme Spirit has always remained a little remote—at least in present-day Yorubadom : *Olorun* is never worshipped with offerings as are the lower or lesser

Gods. The Yorubas describe these lesser Gods by the name of *Orishas*, and it is these *Orishas* who direct the affairs of men, their life with its joys and sorrows, and they also are working through the forces of nature. The word *Orisha* is differently explained as 'the highest one selected' (*ori*—'summit', 'top', and *sha*—'to choose or select'), or as 'one who sees the cult' (*ri*—'to see' and *isha*—'selection, choice'). The neighbouring Akans and other peoples have a similar conception of lower gods, or gods with forms and functions, the Akans calling them *obossum*, the Gans *wong*, and the Ewhes *vondu* (this last is the likely source of the West Indies Negro word *voudou* or *voodoo*). The *Orishas* number, according to various authorities among Yoruba priests, 201, 401 or 600. Many Yorubas have an Euhemeristic idea of their *Orishas*—that these were men and women at first, and then they were translated into the domain of Gods. But Yoruba myth and legend about the origin and history of the *Orishas* is just like the divine myths and legends of other peoples. Olorun created a God to rule this earth in his place—this God was *Obatala* ('the White God' or 'the Lord of Light'), and *Obatala*'s wife was *Odudua*, which may mean 'the Black One'. *Odudua* was not created by Olorun: she is Nature as distinct from the Godhead, and she has been in possession of a separate and independent existence from eternity (this supports another explanation of her name as 'the Self-existent Personage', or 'the Chief who created existence'). *Obatala*-*Odudua*, as twin faces of existence, as light and darkness—of good and evil, of life and death, so to say—recall distantly the Indian conception of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, of *Siva* and *Sakti*; only the *Prakriti* or *Sakti* here among the Yorubas, is of an evil character. The Yorubas worship *Obatala* as the God of Purity and Beneficence, and he is the soul of good, the creator and saviour of men; but *Odudua*'s character has been very adversely conceived,

as something evil and vicious. Obatala is the Sky-Father, and Odudua the Earth-Mother—the lower, sinful aspect of the Earth as opposed to Heaven, has been ascribed to Odudua. It is said that Odudua left her husband Obatala for a passion she conceived for another God who was fond of hunting. Yet Odudua remained the Great Mother Goddess of the Yorubas, the Almighty Mother Earth, who was depicted in the usual way, as in other lands—as a woman as mother holding a baby.

Obatala and Odudua had a son *Aganju*, and a daughter *Yemaja*. These two married, and had two offsprings, *Obalofon* or 'Lord of Speech', and *Iya* or 'Mother'. And *Obalofon* and *Iya* were the progenitors of mankind. Another son of *Aganju* and *Yemaja* was *Orungan*, and this last violated his mother and she, for this, courted death. After her death, her body swelled, and from her flesh, blood, and fat the Fifteen Chief Gods of the Yorubas had their birth. These are the great *Orishas* who receive the worship of the Yorubas who are still faithful to the old religion. Similar deities are found among the related tribes of West Africa—only their genesis is different.

Among the various *Orishas* the following are the most important :

(1) *Shango* is the God of Thunder, and he receives a very great deal of veneration and worship from the Yorubas—with *Ifa* he is the most popular God. He is said to live in state, in a brass palace, in the clouds of heaven, surrounded by his followers, and he is the master of a large number of horses. *Shango* is frequently figured in metal and wooden images—as a bearded man, riding a horse. *Shango* has three wives—*Oya*, *Oshun* and *Oba* ; all the three of them were created from the body of *Yemaja*, like *Shango* himself ; and all of them are river-goddesses, the chief of these three being *Oya* who is the goddess presiding



over the great Niger river in its course through Nigeria. Shango sends punishment to men for their misdeeds. Among Shango's attendants are the god *Oshumare* or 'the Rainbow', whose function it is to draw water from the earth into the brass house of Shango, and *Oru*, the thunder-clap, who is Shango's messenger. Shango's special symbol is the double-axe. The following chant or hymn to Shango is very popular :

O Shango, thou art the master !  
Thou takest in thy hand the fiery stones,  
To punish the guilty !  
To satisfy thy anger !  
Everything they strike is destroyed,  
The fire eats up the forest,  
The trees are broken down,  
And all things living are slain.

Shango's stones are thunder-bolts, and sometimes these are described as the red-hot chains of iron which he hurls on those who offend him, chains made for him by his brother *Ogun*, the God of Iron and War. Prehistoric stone implements like axe-heads are looked upon as thunder-bolts of Shango, and are held as sacred.

(2) *Ogun* presides over iron, war, and hunting. He is said to exist in any piece of iron. Blacksmiths, soldiers, and hunters specially worship him.

(3) *Ifa* is perhaps the most popular of the Orishas, and he is frequently looked upon as the Southern God. He is the God of Oracles, and pious Yorubas must refer everything to the oracle of *Ifa*. The priests of *Ifa* are known as *Babalawos* (from *Baba-li-awo*, 'the father who has the secret'), and these priests are powerful and very much respected. They shave their heads and pluck off all hair, and wear white robes (light blue in the great shrine of *Ifa*), and they are believed to know the mind

of Ifa by means of palm-nuts cast on a tray. It is said of Ifa :

Ifa always speaks in parables,  
 It is the wise man who understands—  
 If we should say we understand—  
 The wise man will understand—  
 When we do not understand,  
 We say, It is of no account ! (or, It is not fulfilled ! ).

These priests are initiated into the order or priesthood at great expense, after they have gone through the training from three to seven years. The profession is quite lucrative, and full of honour.

Apart from oracles, Ifa is a God of Fecundity also, and barren women pray to him for children. He is also a God of Salvation, and in that aspect he is known as *Orunmila*, meaning 'Heaven knows Salvation', or *Ela*, which is a contraction of *Orunmila*. In songs and proverbs he is frequently invoked as the Saviour :

O thou *Ela* ! Son of the Ruler,  
 I humble myself before thee !  
 O *Ela* ! I praise the sacrifice of acceptance,—  
 O *Ela* ! I praise the life-giving sacrifice,—  
 O *Ela* ! I praise the sacrifice of labour.

(4) *Orishako*, *Orisha Oko*, or *Oko*, the God of Agriculture. As in Africa women mostly did agricultural work (working with the hoe), *Oko* has mainly women among his worshippers and priests. *Oko* represents the fertility of the earth. An iron rod is his emblem, and honey-bees are his messengers.

(5) *Shopono* (pronounced *shaw-paw-naw*) is the God of the Small-pox. He is depicted as an old man, sick and lame, moving in pain with the aid of a stick. As the other gods derided him, he tried to infect them with the small-pox, but for this he was outcasted from the society

of the gods. His temples are consequently away from the homes and haunts of men, in the 'bush'.

(6) *Olokun* is the God of the Sea, worshipped specially by sailors and fishermen. He is supposed to be of a human form, black in colour, and with long flowing hair. He once tried to punish men by overflowing the land, but *Obatala* restrained him and sent him back to his palace under the sea, binding him in seven iron chains. Among his wives is *Elusu* or *Olokun-su*, who is depicted as being white in colour, with her body covered with fish-scales.

(7) *Aroni* is a Wood-Spirit, whose dominion is the forest. He seizes and devours all whom he catches in the forest, but he loves courageous persons who face him boldly, and rewards their courage by keeping them with him for months and teaching them the secrets of plants, so that they come out as doctors. The murmur of the wind through the trees and the flying of dead leaves show his presence.

There are other *Orishas*, and the Yoruba pantheon is quite extensive. After the *Orishas*, the Spirits of the Dead, particularly of the Ancestors, find worship. The Yorubas have divided the Ghost World into various kinds of spirits, and there are different kinds of priest-hoods and societies connected with the worship of the spirits. A class of people or priests (called *Oros*) act as spirits of the dead returned to earth, and they perform certain rituals, and receive fees. The *Oros* come out at night, completely covered in robes of rushes, and make weird calls all through the night, and at the same time make noises with what are known as 'bull-roarers'. These are oval and flat bits of wood attached to a string, and when these are swung round with the string they make a buzzing noise, the depth and carrying power of the noise depending upon the size of the bull-roarer, which is from 6 inches

to 2½ feet long. (Ritual with the bull-roarer is known to the aborigines of Australia; and in the State of Tripura in India we have an annual worship of Durga or the Mother Goddess by the Tipra people, in which bull-roarers, locally known in Bengali as *bhomra* or *bhemra*, play a part). In their ritual of worship there are certain other things—offerings and ceremonies—which are the result of their local natural conditions and their culture.

In addition to the gods and spirits, the Yorubas worship also a god or spirit of Evil—a sort of Satan—whom they call *Eshu*.

The Babalawos or priests of Ifa, by their divination, decide for a Yoruba child what particular Orisha he is to adopt as his special protector (as *Ishta Devata*, as we say in India); and they worship regularly and with special ritual these tutelary deities. Religiously-minded Yorubas, who form the bulk of the Yoruba people, salute their special gods the first thing in the morning after rising from bed. When getting down into a river or tank to take a bath, they frequently chant prayers to the Gods—prayers in the Yoruba language. Their temples have nothing special about them—they are just thatched huts, like those in which they themselves live. Different temples or structures in honour of the different gods are built for the public, and rich or middle-class people also have a sort of a family-chapel at home or in the courtyard with images of the gods. Sometimes sacred groves of trees serve as temples; and frequently enough a big tree is looked upon as an abode of the gods. Ordinarily cooked food, fruits, etc. are offered; alcoholic drinks are poured from earthen cups or bottles, eggs are broken, and birds and beasts of various kinds are slaughtered by way of worship. Flowers are not offered, but bells or clappers are used. Different classes of priests have different forms of dress; thus the priests of Obatala always wear white, and have necklaces

of white beads. They salute by touching the earth with the forehead. A sacrificed animal is either burnt before the image, or its blood is smeared on the threshold of the sanctuary. The food and meat as well as wine offered to the gods are partaken of, like consecrated food, by the worshippers. Over and above ordinary ritualistic worship, personal approach to the Deity and worship by prayer is also known. According to their needs, people commonly pray and try to commune by means of prayer with Olorun, Obatala, Shango, Ifa, and the rest.

The Yorubas have a full sense of the immortality of the soul. They hold the belief that man obtains reward or punishment for his deeds. There is also a belief in transmigration. But their ideas and speculations about the Hereafter appear not to be deep or definite or philosophical. The final resting-place of the soul of man is Oolorun or the Supreme Spirit.

We can see that far away in West Africa the so-called wild or "savage" Black Man is actuated by the same ideas and feelings, the same hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, like all other peoples; and the natural religion which they built up has many a point of agreement with our Indian religion—in fact, with all religions. It is difficult to speculate what line their religious life and culture would have taken, if they had come in touch with the mind of Hindu India, with its civilized and cultured outlook and its great spirit of understanding and sympathy, fellow-feeling and tolerance. But I venture to think this much, that the tolerance and respect for other peoples' ideas and beliefs, which is so deeply imbedded down to the marrow of Hindu religious life, the tolerance and respect, which found a new expression in the great saying of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, viz. "as many opinions, so many ways" (*jato mat, tato path*), would have strengthened the Yorubas and other similar backward peoples of Africa and

elsewhere to hold fast to the abiding things of their own culture, would have helped them to find the highest good, their spiritual salvation, in their own way; and would have spared them a good deal of the humiliation which is the result of an intolerant creed, and a strange one, being thrust upon them.

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## THE AKAN CONCEPTION OF THE DIVINITY

The great Akan people, who in their various branches now number some three millions, live in the independent country of Ghana, in the centre and south of Ghana and also in the adjoining eastern half of the southern tracts of the French Colonial State of Ivory Coast. Until two years ago, Ghana was a part of the British Empire and was called "Gold Coast Colony." The State is now over 90,000 square miles in extent, and the population is over 4½ millions. As a result of the nationalist and independence movement which was led by the creators of modern Ghana like Kwame Nkrumah, J. B. Danquah and others, it has been granted independence by the United Kingdom Government, and it is one of the free Commonwealth countries of the present day.

Geographically and ethnologically Ghana presents two areas. The north is dry and depends upon the cultivation of certain plants only, like the millet, and the pea-nut ; and the centre and the south form part of the forest belt of West Africa, and it also depends upon agriculture, cocoa and the oil-palm being two of its most important agricultural products. In the North, the inhabitants belong to various branches of the great 'Gur' people in its different tribes, like the Dagomba, the Tamprusi, the Mamprusi, the Dagari, the Wala etc. These northern peoples are related to the Mossi tribe further to the north, and they are now very largely Muslim. In the Centre and the South live the Akans, and connected with the Akans are the Guang tribe. The most important peoples of the Akan group are the Asante (Ashanti) or Twi (or Chwi), and the Fante. The Akan peoples still very largely retain their national religion ;

and although a great many have become Christians, the percentage of Muslims is negligible among the Akans; and even their Christianity has been very much tempered by the original Akan religion. The Akan peoples are among the most progressive in the whole of Africa, and they possess some of the best human qualities which are to be found in any people anywhere in the world. They are peaceful, but at the same time they are brave in war, and they have a record of military prowess and power which is quite remarkable in Africa. They are also well organized in their socio-religious life. Now they are good agriculturists and businessmen, and they take to modern education most easily.

Although, as has been said before, Christianity has made considerable progress among the Akans, it would appear that those who openly or covertly believe in their national religion and practice do appear to form by far the larger percentage of the Akan people. Even those who have formally adopted Christianity still retain a good many pre-Christian ideas, beliefs, and practices, and they have not normally deserted the old social order in which they lived and had their being. In Ghana, as in other countries of African Africa, there is now a tremendous force of nationalism which is very much operative, and the spirit of nationalism is helping to some extent the maintenance of certain old social and spiritual customs and values, in spite of their being seriously assailed by both Christianity and Islam. Among educated Akans, that is, among those sections of the Akan people who have for the last two or three generations been studying English and acquiring European knowledge (and among them there are many persons who have sojourned in England and other countries abroad—who have "been to" Europe—a person with European experience is commonly called a "Been-to" in West Africa, such people having to a large percentage



formally affiliated themselves to Christianity), a very sympathetic study of the earlier bases of Akan culture and life is now becoming fairly common. There are quite a number of educated people who by their studies and by their writings are helping to create an interest among the Akans in their own national culture and national ideologies.

One such thought-leader among the Akan people is Dr. Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah. He is one of the intellectual and political leaders of West Africa. He was born in 1895 and is a Barrister by profession, and in the field of knowledge he is a Historian; and as a Politician he is a leader of the Ghana Congress Party—the party which has been in opposition to the Convention Peoples' Party of which Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the present Prime Minister of Ghana, is the leader. Dr. Danquah through his historical enquiries has been able to present the early history of the Akan people as it has now been accepted by the Akans. The Akans had their original home, where they began their history, far away to the north of the present Ghana or Gold Coast, in the area between the rivers Senegal and Niger in Western Africa. Before 1000 A. D., there was a great empire there which was built up and maintained by a pure African people. The political establishment of this people may go back to the early centuries of the Christian era. But they became exceedingly powerful and advanced, probably during the middle of the first thousand years after Christ, some 1500 years from now. Unfortunately, as they did not have a knowledge of writing, no authentic records have been kept of the African peoples of the past by themselves, excepting some traditions about dynasties and kings and movements of peoples, and also about wars and alliances. So the earliest reliable information which we get about the ancestors of the Akan people in this area between the

Senegal and the Niger rivers is from the Muslim Arab Geographers and Historians. In early Arabic works, beginning with El-Bekri's "Description of Africa", 11th century A. D., the African kingdom, which appears to have been the primitive home of the present-day Akan people, was known as *Ghana* (Gana). Here in this ancient Ghana, with its capital in the city of Kumbi (the exact location of which is not known), an African people, apparently as yet not mixed with the white Hamitic Berber peoples of the North, had built up, as early as the 4th Century A. D., their state and its complex corporate life under the lead of their own kings and religious men. It was a flourishing and peaceful country with a stable government, which evidently made the Muslim peoples of North-Western Africa, the Arabs and the Moors, feel an interest in and an admiration for it. The Arabs with Islam were at that time in the great period of their expansionist movement in Northern Africa, and they pushed also towards West Africa and Central Africa through both the Sahara and Southern Egypt, Nubia and Sudan. And already in the capital city of the Ghana empire in the 11th century there was a flourishing colony of Berber and Arab Muslims, in a separate quarter of their own, and they supplied to the Ghana court officers for important posts in the state. From before the 11th Century, the original, people of Ghana who were not yet Muslims and followed their own African way of life, came in conflict with the Muslim Arabs and Berbers from the North, and ultimately, during the 13th century, the independent African State of Ghana was destroyed by the Muslim Berbers and Arabs and their Islamized African followers. It is believed that a considerable portion of the Ghana people, after suffering from these severe reverses in their home country, pushed through the South, towards the Atlantic, in search of new homes, where they could establish themselves and follow their own way of life.

Gradually they found themselves in central and southern parts of what was called by the European adventurers from the 15th century 'Gold Coast Territory' and 'Ivory Coast Territory' to the North of the Atlantic; and there they settled down. In this area, they became modified into the Akan people, and the old religion and customs and way of life of the ancient Ghana empire became transformed into the religion and culture and society of the Akans. The word *Ghana* and the word *Akan* (or *A-kan*) have been looked upon as being the same word in two different forms—*Ghana* (which is the Arabic way of writing *Gana*, as the Arabs did not have a letter for the sound of *g* as in *go*, *get*, used their letter for the spirant sound of *gh* for this sound as the nearest equivalent). *A-kan* is from this point of view a later form of the name *Ghana* or *Gana*. After attaining independence from Britain, the Akans have revived their past memories, and are now once again rejoicing in the name of *Ghana* as a new and a proud name for their independent state. In this name, therefore, there is a conscious pride in their past history, that the Akans, or *Ghanaians*, as they now call themselves in English, are really the ancient and powerful Ghana people.

The past frequently comes to the rescue of a people in the present; and in order to strengthen them in their aspirations in the present and the future, people naturally seek to derive whatever support they can from their past. In Africa, the African peoples had developed an inferiority complex by being told continually by both the Muslims from the North and the Christian powers who came by way of the sea in the South that they had never been in possession of any civilization of their own. and therefore they were in the comity of nations an inferior people; and there was a tacit acceptance of this position by a people which felt itself helpless before the science and organization and power of Europe. But now owing to

archaeological and historical discoveries which are being made, and owing also to a study of the bases of West African life and society, as well as owing further to the discovery by the West of the great Art of Africa, the African peoples themselves—at least the educated *elite* among them—are becoming more and more alive to the bases of their culture, and they are finding its general reasonableness and its human character. Although the average educated African may not as yet understand the whole thing, yet he is recovering a vague sense of there being something in the life and culture of Africa, which will be of great value for him, and, it may be, also for Humanity.

Dr. Danquah, in spite of his differences with the leaders of other political parties, is acknowledged to be a great scholar of things Akan, and he is respected by everybody for his erudition. Dr. Danquah is the author of a remarkable book, "The Akan Doctrine of God—A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion" (Lutterworth Press, London, 1944). This is the most sympathetic and most penetrating study of African religion by an African scholar who has direct contact with that religion and has lived within its atmosphere. There are a number of books by European scholars—Anthropologists, Sociologists, Missionaries and Students of Philosophy—which are of course very valuable, as the equipment with which these investigators took up the study is very necessary. But in the case of Dr. Danquah, he has a double advantage. He is an Akan himself who knows intimately the religion and philosophical ideas and practices as current among his people, and who at the same time is a Ph. D. and LL. B. of the University of London. Dr. Danquah has discussed in this book the ideas which are current among the Akan priests and religious leaders with regard to the nature of the Supreme Being, and the character of the human soul

and personality, as well as the relation between Man and God, and Man and Society. There is another Ghana scholar, Dr. K. A. Busia, who was for a number of years Professor of Sociology in Achimota College near Accra (now the University of Ghana). Dr. Busia has an international reputation as a Sociologist, particularly with reference to African society. He also took a considerable part in the politics of Ghana, and at present (1959) he is a Visiting Professor in a University on the continent in Europe. Dr. Busia has a number of books and papers on African ideology and African society. I have had the privilege of reading Dr. Danquah's book, and also one important article by Dr. Busia (which has been published, pp. 190-209, in "African Worlds—Studies in the Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African Peoples", edited by Prof. Daryll Forde, International African Institute, London, Oxford University Press 1954). While travelling in West Africa in 1954, I had the honour to be invited by Dr. Danquah to his house at Accra and to have dinner with him and a number of other African intellectuals and leaders. I did not at that time have the opportunity to read Dr. Danquah's book, but I had some talk with him on the subject. I did not then have any knowledge of the Akan religion, and so I could not profit by my contact with him. During my visit to West Africa, unfortunately for me Dr. Busia was away in America, and consequently I did not have the privilege of meeting him.

The English writer Capt. (Dr.) R. S. Rattray was a Government official in Gold Coast (Ghana) for a number of years. He has made very extensive researches into the history, culture, religion, sociology and political ideas of the Ashanti or Akan people, and he has a number of authoritative works on these subjects. From his writings also we get a good deal of accurate information about some of the basic Akan ideologies.

I have also consulted two very interesting and informative, and well-illustrated books on the Akan, by Eva I. R. Meyerowitz, "the Sacred State of the Akan" (London 1956) and "the Akan of Ghana" (London 1958), which give some detailed information about the religious ideas, cults and practices of the Akan, as well as their political and social organization and their art.

Like almost all the peoples of Africa, the Akans believe in a Divinity who is all-powerful and who is the Ultimate Source of whatever we see in the Universe. In the Akan language, they call this Supreme Spirit or Divinity *Onyankopon*, which means "the Great Supreme Being who is Unique and without a second". The word also connotes "the Great Shining One." Behind the Universe, the World of Man and Nature, is the Supreme Spirit. Every man has the power as well as the inherent right to come into direct contact with this Supreme Spirit, and for this there is no necessity to have a Priest or a Vicar of God as an intermediary. There is no special class of priests to minister to *Onyankopon* as the Supreme Spirit. The Supreme Spirit itself is not conceived in any form, but the Akan have conceived some manifest forms or representations of this Supreme Spirit. There are other Divinities—lesser Gods and Goddesses—who have forms and for whom there are various classes of priests to minister to their worship, and to act as links between the worshippers and these Gods. These lesser Divinities who are but forms of *Onyankopon*, are known as the *Obosoms*. The *Obosoms* are in a way the different mouth-pieces or active representatives of the Supreme Spirit. In Akan or Ashanti religion, as in other systems of polytheism, there is room for a number of Gods and Goddesses. The presiding deities of the principal rivers and streams in the Ashanti country as well as the God of the Sea are looked upon as the children of *Onyankopon*. The ideas of the Akan people about their

Gods are similar to what people in other parts of the world hold with regard to the Gods, Angels, Apostles, Prophets as well as Saints in their own religions. The Gods have got to be kept in a sympathetic or benign mood by offering them food and drink and sacrifices of birds and animals ; and as return gifts, they ensure for men happiness and prosperity. These Gods have dealings with the people through the intermediacy of the priests, and the priests are frequently "possessed" by the Gods. The whole universe is filled with Gods—big Gods and little Gods ; and an Unseen Force fills up and moves all living creatures as well as mountains and hills and rivers and streams, the sea and the sea-shore, and trees and plants.

The old Indian (Hindu) notion, that even trees and creepers and grasses have got some inner perception within themselves, would be fully subscribed to by the Akans, as much as by many other African peoples. This idea was so very prominent in African religion that it was on the basis of this that the common European expression Animism (the belief in an *anima*, the Latin word for 'breath', 'spirit' and 'soul', which has its equivalent in the cognate Sanskrit word *anila* meaning 'air' or 'wind', i. e. belief in some kind of spirit working in everything) has been used to describe African religion. But African religion is not really Animism, but rather *Dynamism* in its basic concept—the sense of a Supreme Force operating through everything in the universe.

In Akan religion, among the various Obosoms or the Deities of the Pantheon, the Goddess of the Earth has got a place of honour. The Earth Goddess is honoured, in the first instance, as *Asaase Afua* or "Fertile Earth", the deity of fertility or procreation, and as such she is the wife of the Sun, as a manifestation of the Supreme Spirit, Onyankopon. God in Heaven as the Father of the Universe, and Earth as the Mother of everything that grows and lives on her, is an

old conception, which is found in most ancient religions. The idea is analogous to the Indo-European conception of Sky the Father and Earth the Mother (in Sanskrit, *Dyaush Pitar* and *Prithivi Matar*, in Greek *Zeus Pater* and *Plateia Meter*). Asaase Afua brings out fruits and roots and trees and crops for us to sustain our life. The Earth Goddess is also worshipped as *Asaase Yaa* or "Barren Earth". But the Earth Goddess does not foretell the future for us. There are also various local Gods, Gods who are worshipped specially by people of certain states or areas, and they in many cases have become common Gods of the Akan Pantheon. Among them, the most important are *Tano* (or *Tano Twumpuduro*), originally the God of the Bono Kingdom. He is a Creator God, and God of Good Luck. Then there are *Taa Kora* of Tanoboase, *Toakese* of Takyiman, and a few more. These Akan Gods have not developed a personality like the Gods and Goddesses of other religions, like the ancient Egyptian and Babylonian, Greek and Hindu, and Chinese and Japanese religions. The Yorubas of Nigeria, on the other hand, show greater imagination, and have evolved a fuller Pantheon comparable to those of the Greeks and Hindus. They are vaguely forms of the Supreme Spirit, and each form or manifestation has its own symbol, and its connected star and animal, and is endowed with certain powers as helper of man. To minister to them on behalf of men, there are priests with their elaborate rituals.

The ritual generally followed in the worship of *Nyan-kopon* or *Nyame* the Supreme Divinity is very simple and impressive. In most Akan houses they have in the open courtyard a tall and slender tree-trunk with three forks at the top, upon which is placed a vessel of clay or metal in which they put water, a stone celt, and some herbs. This is a kind of simple altar which is called the *Nyame Dua*, or "the Tree or Seat of God." There is a



circle of stones around the base of this tree-altar. The priest comes, with the master of the house and the people attending, and he pours a libation of water the Supreme Spirit at the foot of the tree-trunk. This is the simple ritual: prayers are also muttered, and the whole thing is quite solemn.

Next to the Obosom or the Gods proper, the Akan have a belief that many special objects, like various kinds of pebbles or stones, roots of trees, beads of stone or seeds, feathers of some birds, horns of sheep, and many similar objects, possess a magical property. These little objects are kept by the priests and wizards in gourds or bundles or bags, and then they are utilised in various ways to bring good or evil to man. These objects, which are supposed to be endowed with magic, were known to the Portuguese as *feticao*, which means "objects which are made by the hand of man", and this Portuguese word has been transformed into English as *fetish*, which is used for sacred or magical objects of different kinds, or talismans or mascots, which bring luck or good to man. Some people, without understanding the deeper implications of African religion, have taken note of this popular aspect of it from the outside, and they have wrongly given the name *Fetishism* to African religion. In the same way, the word *Fetishism* could be used with regard to other religions also, when we consider the large amount of superstition in practical life all over the world, involving a belief in magical powers of consecrated objects, relics of saints, holy water, charms and mascots. The Akans, like many other African peoples, and also like people living in other parts of the world, have a tremendous faith in magic of various sorts, and in the possibility of bringing evil to man through the help of evil spirits. They believe in the existence of a number of pigmy Deities who live in the forest, and these are known as *Mmoatia* or "Tiny Gods." They believe

also in the powers of the *Abayifo* or witches. In the list of evil spirits in Akan popular religion, there is to be noted a demon named *Sasabonsam*, who lives in the forest. *Sasabonsam* is believed to have a body covered with long hair, his eyes are like red balls and his feet are long and the soles of his feet can move both backwards and forwards. Such a demoniac creature is believed to sit on the branches of some high tree and hang his two feet down below, and catch unwary travellers with his feet and so kill them. They are not always cruel or ferocious, and sometimes, according to Akan belief, they take some hunter in their protection, and teach him the art of healing through the use of plants and roots in the forest.

The Akan particularly believe that, in the formation of his body and his spirit, a human being acquires from his mother the physical body consisting of his flesh and bones and blood etc., and this physical body is known among the Ashantis as the *Mogya*; and from his father, man obtains his soul, which is called *Ntoro*. The relationship between mother and son, and between father and son, are on different footings. They think (or used to think) that the relationship with the mother is much deeper for the personality of man. The social organization of the Akans, as in many other parts of the world, was in early times matriarchal, and not patriarchal. In addition to the *Mogya* or the physical body and the *Ntoro* or the spiritual element in man, there are several other elements in the composition of the human being or personality. One of these is known as *Sunsum*, which is man's Ego or his Personality proper, and the other is the *Kra* or his Life-force. *Sunsum* or the Personality does not endure forever—it is destroyed along with the death of the physical body. But *Kra* is something which is God-given, and it comes through the father like the *Ntoro*, and one might say that the *Ntoro* and *Kra* are the inner spiritual elements in man. This *Ntoro* is not

uniform in all types of men ; and according to Ashanti and other Akan belief, society has been divided into different groups or classes or clans, taking note of the different types of the *Ntoro*.

Another very noteworthy side of Akan religion and society is the Respect for the Ancestors, which virtually amounts to their regular worship. This Cult of the Ancestors may be described as one of the basic things in Akan (and most other African) Society. Even many of the Akan people who have formally accepted the Christian religion have not always been able to abandon their old racial conceptions of the universe, and connected with that their social organization and sense of social unity, as well as the means of preserving this unity.

All these are connected with the Cult of the Ancestors. It is a very deep-seated religious notion which is still very strong among all sections of the Akan people ; and this is undoubtedly expressive of a certain amount of inner strength and resilience in Akan religion. There is the inexplicable and omnipotent Supreme Divinity Onyankopon, who is in his own nature beyond the perception of man. As a part of his great body, so to say, there are the various Gods and Goddesses who have their separate forms. Next in order to the Gods are the Ancestors ; and the Akan people, by performing a number of ceremonies and observing certain rituals, which are comparable to the *Sraddha* ritual of the Hindus, try to keep up not only a personal but also a communal relationship with the ancestors. This is one great way of ensuring personal as well as social welfare. These ideas, as has been said before, are sometimes found to be equally strong among Christian Akans. Islam, as Dr. Danquah has said in his book, has failed among the Akan people, because among other things the personal relationship with the unseen forces, the relationship like that of the son with the father,

which goes deep down into the religious perception of the Akans, is not tolerated in Islam. In the Quran, there is a definite condemnation of the idea of the fatherhood of God and the sonship of Man. The approved Muslim conception of the relationship between God and Man is that of Master and Servant or Slave, and at the highest that of Friends. This is what Dr. Busia has said in this connexion, and it is to be taken note of :

The ceremonialism connected with worship has made it a resilient force which Christianity has not assailed. Many Ashanti Christians join in Adae celebrations with their fellow countrymen and share the sentiments that the ceremonials keep alive : a sense of tribal unity and continuity, and a sense of dependence upon the ancestors. This aspect of Ashanti life has suffered little change from the impact of European civilisation.....The Ashanti Christian most probably still accepts the view of the universe and of man that has dominated Ashanti thought for generations. It is a part of his cultural heritage.....The Ashanti concept of man has not changed either.....Moreover, Christian teaching has confirmed the Ashanti conception of the soul.....On the social level, and in certain details of conduct, Christianity is influencing Ashanti society, but in matters like birth or funeral rites, where questions of the interpretation of the universe come in, the influence of Christianity is slight. (*vide* "African Worlds" as edited by Dr. Daryll Forde, mentioned above, pp. 208, 209).

The following observation of Dr. Busia is also noteworthy :

The Gods are treated with respect if they deliver the goods, and with contempt if they fail ; it is the Supreme Being and the ancestors that are always treated with reverence and awe, a fact which an onlooker who has seen Ashanti chiefs or elders making offerings or pouring

libations to the ancestors can hardly fail to observe. The Ashanti, like all other Akan tribes, esteem the Supreme Being and the ancestors far above gods and amulets. Attitudes to the latter depend upon their success, and vary from healthy respect to sneering contempt. (*Ibid.*, p. 205.)

It is easy to see that in the mind of the Akan people some ideas and thoughts, which are indicative of a very advanced sense or feeling with regard to God and Man, have acquired such a wide as well as a deep place that they are difficult to eradicate. Naturally enough, in the Christianity as it is developing among the Akans (and probably also in the Islam, where it is finding a foothold in the Akan country), there will be a considerable amount of influence from the native religious thought and practices of the Akans. In our country we find a similar thing also working in the minds of our native Indian Christians and Muslims. In spite of their conversion to a foreign religion, many ideas and practices which the masses in India have in their blood and which they inherited from their ancestors are still being maintained, and they are but superficially Christianised or Islamised; and in actual work we have to a large extent just Indianised forms of Islam and Christianity in India and Pakistan.

In Dr. Danquah's book we find a very penetrating analysis of Akan ideas and beliefs regarding the Supreme Spirit and the Human Soul, which their religious thinkers have elaborated. There are numerous names of the Supreme Being which are current among the Akans. If these names are analysed in their meanings, we can obtain a good conception of Akan ideas regarding the Godhead. In the Akan language, there are three main names of the Supreme Spirit:

(1) *Onyame*—which means in a general way "The Supreme Lord". The Supreme Spirit is considered to be

both male and female; and as Onyame, according to Meyerowitz, it is the female aspect which is specially thought of. Onyame is considered as the Great Mother Goddess who is the giver of life, and the Earth Goddess is her daughter.

(2) *Onyankopon*—this name stands for a Divinity endowed with a personality, in whom human worship finds its place. In this form, or with this epithet, the Supreme Spirit is also considered to be the Sun God, as a Male Divinity, who is the husband of *Asaase Afua*, the Fertile Earth.

(3) *Odomankoma*—which connotes something more philosophical or spiritual than the other two names. It signifies "the Supreme Spirit" whose outward form is this Universe and who is without change or without diminution, who is One and at the same time Many, and who is manifest everywhere in this world which we see round us; he is limitless and lord of all glory, and the creator of unending plentitude, and is also the bountiful giver. There is a mystic song current about *Odomankoma*, which runs thus :

*Odomankoma* :  
He created the Thing ;  
"Hewer-Out" Creator ;  
He created the Thing ;  
What did he create ?  
He created *Esen* (or the Herald),  
He created *Kyerema* (the Drummer),  
He created *Obrafo* (the Executioner)  
as its quintessence.

As Dr. Danquah has explained these terms—Herald, Drummer and Executioner—are words which mean respectively "Order or Divine Law", "Knowledge", and "Death," in the poetic symbolism of the Akan language.

In its three names or aspects of Onyame, Onyankopon and Odomankoma, we have the Akan Trinity or Triad, representing also the revolving universe, the life-force and the visible world, respectively.

A few other names of the Supreme Spirit may also be noted :

(4) *Brek'yirihunuadè*—which means, "He who knows or sees all—whether the thing known or seen is facing him or is behind him, i. e. after he has left the scene". This is the equivalent of the English word "All-knowing or Omniscient."

(5) *Abommubuwafrè*—"He whom you call in your experience of distress : a Consoler or Comforter."

(6) *Nyaamanekose*—"He in whom you confide troubles which come upon you."

(7) *Tetekwaframua*—"He who is there now from ancient times, He who endures forever"

(8) *Oboadee*—"He who created the Thing"; this is the description which also goes with the name Odomankoma.

(9) *Opanyin*—"Prince or Superior Chief or Sovereign of all, even of this wide Earth."

(10) *Otumfo*—"The Person of power or majesty."

(11) *Nana*—"The Great Ancestor." Saturday (*Kwaame*) is the day sacred to this Ancestor Aspect of the Supreme Divinity.

(12) *Totorobonsu*, in its various forms : "He who causes rain to form copiously and makes rivers overflow."

These epithets of the Supreme Spirit indicate a very elevated conception which the Akan people in the evolution of their religious notions came to formulate.

Among the Akans, there are quite a number of Proverbs about the Supreme Spirit which are widely current. The Akan priests, of course, have their own established notions about this all, but they have no sacred books. Their

philosophical disquisitions or arguments have been preserved mainly through their Proverbs, and these proverbs are always very short and pithy, like the Sanskrit *sutras* of ancient India. High philosophical notions, and along with that shrewd observations on men and things, have been preserved and continued down the generations through these Proverbs. I am giving from Dr. Danquah's book a few of these proverbial expressions in which are enshrined the wisdom and the faith of the Akan people and their thought-leaders. These Proverbs have been collected already by European students of Akan language and culture, like J. G. Christaller and Capt. (Dr.) R. S. Rattray. Christaller's collection was published from Basel in Switzerland in 1879, and Rattray's from Oxford in 1913; and there are several thousands of them. Quite a good number of these relate to God and to the metaphysical and mystic world and experience. I am quoting some of these from Dr. Danquah's book :

- (1) God is an eternal Spirit.
- (2) Odomankoma created the rich man, but he created the poor man as well.
- (3) It was none but Odomankoma who made death eat poison.
- (4) Onyame needs no pointing out to a child.
- (5) The Earth is wide, but Onyame is cheap.
- (6) Says the Hawk : "All God did is good."
- (7) God is the justification of all Things (end as well as cause).
- (8) Oh God ! there is something above, let it reach me.
- (9) Would God die, I would die.
- (10) All men are Onyame's off-spring.
- (11) Living men cannot subvert the order which Onyame has settled.
- (12) There is no by-pass to Onyame's destiny.



(13) Let living man empty your goblet of wine, Nyankopon will re-fill it.

(14) Unless you die, could Nyankopon let living man kill you and you will not perish.

(15) If you tell Nyankopon, tell the wind.

(16) If you would serve Nyankopon, be thorough, attaching no conditions.

(17) If all men suffer Nyankopon together, the individual does not suffer.

(18) I face upwards and cannot see Nyankopon, but what of you sprawling downwards ?

Akan Proverbs like the above are pregnant with meaning, and they show in what way the mind of this highly advanced African people has been working. As Dr. Danquah has explained it, in Akan thought God is forever present within this earth or this universe. He is not a lord or master who is living outside this universe in a separate heaven. As in India we say, "He sports in the universe, He sports in the individual" (*khelati ande, khelati pinde*), the Akans have a similar idea. In Dr. Danquah's words : "The Deity does not stand over against his own creation, but is involved in it. He is 'of' it." According to the Christian idea, Satan or the Principle of Sin exists out of the Divinity, and the presence of Satan would appear to go counter to God's omniscience and His omnipotence. In Akan ideology,

The Nana, the principle that makes for good, is himself or itself [ here we ought to note the use of the neuter gender to indicate the unmanifested Supreme Spirit, as in Indian philosophy ] participator in the life of the whole, and is not only head but because it is head, it has to strive and struggle for the place of leader or *Opanyon* as the individuals of the group do, then physical pain and evil are revealed as natural forces which the Nana, in common with the others of the group, have to

master, dominate, sublimate or eliminate.....The being of Nyankopon, in the ideal the pursuit of which man hopes to be good, is revealed in its greatest perfection where all evil is progressively mastered. The revelation may be slow, delayed, thwarted and obstructed by man's own ignorance, or sheer unwillingness to see the light where it shines most, but until that revelation is complete, evil will continue, not as apart from life, but as part of life, a condition which makes it all the more necessary to have a complete knowledge of Nyankopon, for it is only in knowing him fully that evil is eliminated from the *Sunsum*, and the *Okara* (the Soul) becomes complete master of each man's Destiny. ("The Akan Doctrine of God", pp. 88-89. )

Here one can note that as in the Indian philosophy of the Vedanta there is a profound bias or stress towards knowledge as the means to eliminate evil and to realize the Ultimate Truth. In the Indian conception, too, Sin or Evil is the result of Ignorance.

From the brief study above, it would be seen that in the mind of the African people there arose questions about the Ultimate Reality, as much as in the minds of the more advanced peoples. Undoubtedly, the ideas which were moving these so-called uncivilized Black Peoples of Africa deserve respectful attention from the rest of the world. Dr. Danquah has also discussed in detail, among other matters, Akan Ethics, the Moral Progress of Man, and the Progress of Mankind as a whole, along the lines of the views of the wise men of his own African people. With regard to the Truth or the Reality, about Human Society and Man, about the Spiritually Perfect Man, and other matters of very deep import, Dr. Danquah has sought to give an expression to the Akan point of view in his book. It might be questioned by critics as to what extent these ideas are really of the Akan people, or are Dr. Danquah's

own ideas which he sought to read in them. Only a deeper study of the matter by competent African scholars can let us have the true picture. But Dr. Danquah himself is a great scholar in European science—in Philosophy, in History, in Law and in other subjects. But he at the same time is proud to be an Akan and to feel as an Akan. Consequently, whatever he has said as an exposition or a commentary has to be tested on the background of ancient Akan ideas in these subjects.

In the course of the above study, one thing becomes quite clear, that the different ways of thought almost everywhere in the world follow the same course, and they reach to the same goal; and one great principle seems to be operating in all these different and diverse points of view, and that principle is that the Desire for the Unseen Reality behind life is something which has moved humanity everywhere; and this is the basic thing which has made men of different races, colours and creeds feel a kinship with each other.

Dr. Danquah himself has thought over this matter, and I can do nothing better than quote these lines by himself, about which he has made the following observation. He was in London long ago, before he had written his book, when, with his

mind wandering for a peg to hang on passing thoughts, the following lines, one summer evening, came, as it were, from nowhere, and stayed long enough to be jotted down: The title was "The 'All' of God", or "The Philosophy of the Common"—

i. *Of God.*

"The All of God is God.

God is not Christian,

Nor Moslem,

Nor King,

Nor Three,

Nor One,  
Nor Many,  
But all.  
All is all all.  
All is common.  
All all is God.  
God is common.

ii. *Of Self.*

Self is not all.  
All is all,  
Your self,  
His self,  
My self :  
That is not all.  
All is without self,  
For all is common.  
No self is, or can be  
Unless there are selves.  
No selves are in all,  
For God is all,  
Without relations,  
But all—  
Not All-Self,  
But Common."

"All things proceed from the necessity  
That All evolves all,  
All things,  
Without exception."

The above lines appear to be strangely like some of the passages in our Vedanta literature. I am reminded specially of this Invocation from the Upanishads :

*purnam adah, purnam idam, purnat purnam ud-acyate,  
purnasya purnam adaya purnam eva ava-sisyate :*

"That is full ; this is full. The full comes out of the full. Taking the full from the full, the full itself remains."

They also suggest certain passages of the *Tao-Teh-King* and other great classics of spiritual intuition and mystic experience, which recognizes All Being as One.

I venture to think that if the priestly thinkers of the Akan ( and possibly other forms of African ) religion are enabled to formulate their own ideas on the question of the Ultimate Reality and the Spiritual Ground of the Universe, they will be able to make a distinct and a remarkable contribution to the philosophic thought and mystic experience of Mankind. Then this African contribution will have its value for Humanity, and will be able to add another Soul, so to say, to Man—another way of approach to the Godhead. And that will be a consummation devoutly to be wished.

## A SHORT VISIT TO WEST AFRICA

Gold Coast (Ghana), Nigeria, Liberia

( July-August 1954 )

26 and 27 July : Tripoli

I left Calcutta on the morning of the 21st July 1954, and arrived in Delhi by plane by mid-day, and I had to spend three days there making arrangements with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations for my trip. When everything was in proper order, I was enabled to leave Delhi on the 24th July 1954, by the afternoon 2-30 plane, and arrived in Bombay at 5-30 the same evening. At 7-30 P.M. I left for Cairo by the Air-India International plane, and reached there at 1-50 in the morning (Cairo time) on the 25th July.

I had to stay for one day and one night in Cairo to take my Misr-Air plane for Tripoli on the 26th. On the 26th I left for Tripoli, the capital of the new Arab State of Libya, and arrived there by mid-day. I had to stay in Tripoli for the 26th and the whole of the 27th. The B.O.A.C., whose passenger I was to be from Tripoli to Accra, put me in Hotel Waddan, one of the *de luxe* hotels built by the Italians.

These two days in Tripoli were very interesting for me. I visited the more important places within the city, and I contacted some of the officers there connected with education in Libya. I met His Excellency Mohammed Jamal-ed-Din Bashagha el-Adghem, the Minister of Education, and a number of officers of the Education Department. They were very kind and courteous, and they told me how they were trying to liquidate illiteracy by teaching Arabic through the Laibach method, which they have

adopted in their primers and elementary books. They sent to my hotel two packets of books, one to be presented to our Education Minister for India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and one for myself. These books were all in Arabic and related to the history of Tripoli.

Tripoli I found to be a very beautiful town and the Italians who were ruling over this part of North Africa from 1913 had certainly done their best to make this lovely place on the sun-lit Mediterranean a town which would be worthy of both their own country and of the Arab world. They had embellished it with some fine buildings, and all the streets in the new town are beautifully laid with trees—red, pink and white oleanders largely—on either side. The Arabs were naturally coming to their own in their country—the population of the whole of Libya has not yet reached the million mark, and I was told that there were over 80 thousand Italians in the country in a population of 900,000. It seemed that Italy had sent people of the humbler classes to make a permanent home in Libya—in the town I saw them as tailors, washermen, chauffeurs, barbers and people connected in small business. It was inevitable that a good percentage of them will ultimately merge among the local Arab population. Tripoli was still largely Italian, and outside of the Kasbah, or the old Arab town, with its Arabian Nights set-up, the general atmosphere was that of a town of Italy. The senior Arab officers all still spoke only Italian, but a knowledge of English, as the European language suitable for a free Libya, was becoming very common. The Arabic language was being rehabilitated in every sphere, and Arabic captions were in evidence in all public places, in place of Italian. The House of the Representatives was *al-Majlis an-Nuwab* and that of the Senators or Elders—the Senate—was *al-Majlis ash-Shuyukh*. Through Urdu, it is easy for an Indian to spot many of the Arabic expressions.

There were three Indian merchants, all Sindhis, who had their usual curio and textile shops, and I met one of them who received me very warmly in his shop—he was Sri Govindram Kewalram of the *Pearl of India Stores*. He thought that there was not much prospect for Indian business in Tripoli. The Indians were so far in very good terms with both the Italians, who were realizing that they had no future in Libya, and the Arabs, who were coming up.

I was also told that there were some Pakistani and Indian Muslim gentlemen working with the Libyan Government. I met Sri Sajjad Mirza from Hyderabad, an Indian National, who was a UNESCO Officer for Education, with his office in the Government Training College. Mirza Sahib appeared to be held in very great respect by all the Tripolitan Professors whom I met, and I had a long chat with him and I found him to be a very fine gentleman with an amiable personality, and he was a highly cultured person with liberal ideas.

On the night of the 27th I boarded my plane, the B.O.A.C. Dakotah—for Accra via Kano. We left Tripoli at about mid-night, and after quite a comfortable journey through the night, during which we crossed the eastern part of the Sahara, we arrived at Kano early in the morning. At Kano air-port where we had an hour's halt, I despatched some letters and telegrams to different people, and then by the same plane we flew to Accra where we arrived at about 10-30, an hour later than the scheduled time.

Kano is the most important town of Northern Nigeria, and is Muslim, and the local people speak mainly the Hausa language. But Government officials are mostly from South Nigeria, Igbos and Yorubas, and they in contrast with the orthodox and old-fashioned Hausas, know English and are smart and efficient. The person in charge of the post-office at the air-port, where daily papers, books and



nick-nacks were also for sale, was a tall and lanky Igbo lad who seemed to be exceedingly self-possessed, and even aggressively so.

28 and 29 July, 1954 : Accra, Gold Coast (Ghana)

At Accra air-port I was received by Raja Rameswara Rao, Commissioner of India for West Africa (Gold Coast and Nigeria) accompanied by Sri Narendra Singh and some other members of the Indian Commissioner's office at Accra. The Raja Sahib was a first-rank *jagirdar* or feudatory prince under the Nizam in Hyderabad State (now merged in Andhra State), and Sri Singh was a young member of a Rajput princely house in North India. I was made a guest of the Gold Coast Government for the first three days, and was lodged in the State Guest House, but I was very kindly invited by the Rani Sahiba (the wife of the Indian Commissioner) and the Raja Sahib to have my meals with them. A programme of my sojourn in Gold Coast was already prepared by Raja Rameswara Rao's office. Both the Raja Sahib and the Rani Sahiba were exceedingly kind and helpful to me, and they made every arrangement for making my visit to Gold Coast fruitful in all ways. In the afternoon I was taken to the famous Achimota University by the Raja Sahib. The University was closed at the time, but the Raja Sahib took me to meet Professor Lawrence (brother of the famous "Lawrence of Arabia"), an anthropologist, who was in charge of the National Museum at Achimota. This I was enabled to visit in the company of Prof. Lawrence. The same evening one of the secretaries of the Indian Commission, a Nayar gentleman from Kerala State, gave a buffet dinner in his place, to which the Raja Sahib and the local Indian community were invited. I had an opportunity of meeting many of our compatriots in Accra at that dinner.

On the 29th we were present at the opening of the new session of the Gold Coast Parliament by the Governor of Gold Coast. There was a guard of honour of very smart African soldiers, and fanfares of trumpets announcing the Governor's arrival. It was a very elaborate ceremony, and it was quite colourful, with the officers of the Parliament including the Speaker, all African gentlemen, dressed in white wigs and English court costumes, while all the 106 Members who were present were dressed in various colourful Gold Coast costumes. The Governor read the message of Queen Elizabeth to the people of Gold Coast, in which she had declared her promise to grant Full Independence to the People of Gold Coast Colony in 1956; and the Governor then read out the speech, "as prepared by the new Cabinet". It appeared that the people of Gold Coast possessed a very capable and a most intelligent group of representatives in their Parliament.

After the ceremony was over, I could see in the streets a series of very remarkable spontaneous demonstrations among the people showing the immense popularity of the Prime Minister of Gold Coast, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and his party. There were lots of people, youths and young girls as well as grown-up men and women, who were dancing to the accompaniment of drums, and there was a great jubilation among the people at the announcement of their freedom in 1956. In a long motor-car procession the popular Ministers and Members of the Parliament went through the main streets of the town receiving the ovations of the people. Men and women speaking different dialects were singing and dancing in many parts of the town.

This day I had a very long interview lasting for about 45 minutes with Mr. W. A. Hadow, Deputy Governor of Gold Coast. Mr. Hadow seemed to be exceedingly sympathetic for the African people in his charge. We

talked about various matters relating particularly to the cultural and economic situation in Gold Coast, and Mr. Hadow corrected some of my views with regard to the change in the character of the people as they were being transformed from a primitive and mostly hunting community ( with a sufficient amount of primitive agriculture for their local food needs ) to a more intensively farming one. The farmers were making money on cocoa, their main money-crop, and the people bought their food from outside. Not much interest was shown in food-production, and if there was a slump in the cocoa-market, it would mean famine. The Government was very much concerned over this situation. It was felt necessary to build up a steady farmer tradition in the country.

After this interview, I met the Acting Director of Social Welfare, an Englishman named Mr. du Sautoy, who gave me some reports and papers, particularly in connexion with the attempts made by the Government to spread literacy in the country. This was certainly a difficult task as there were numerous languages which had to be taken note of, although at present the Government prepared little packets of primary text-books for selling at cheap price in four languages only.

After this I had a long talk with one of the Ministers of State, Mr. Kojo Botsio, who was exceedingly interested in what I had to say about the proper study of African life and culture. In Mr. Botsio's room, I had my first interview with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who kindly told me that he had heard about me and would give me some time later on for a close conversation. I could not recognize him at first when he came into the room—he seemed to be a very intelligent and nice-looking young secretary, or even student, who had called. But he himself spoke to me that he thought of giving me an interview, and then I realized that I was talking to the great leader of Africa.

He smiled in a pleasant way when I apologized and mentioned my initial mistake.

The rest of the afternoon I spent in a walk through the famous market-place of Accra where I found native African life with all its colour and movement, presenting quite a gorgeous sight. The people everywhere were exceedingly friendly, and there were smiles and general good humour everywhere ; and certainly from what I saw of the Africans in their ordinary avocations, both in Gold Coast and in Nigeria and Liberia, particularly among the people of what is known as "the Coastal Forest Belt" where the native African way of life is still very largely preserved, I was confirmed in my idea that the people had a very fine culture behind them, although they did not produce any great 'civilization'.

In the evening there was a sherry-party given by the Governor of Gold Coast, Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clarke. It was held in the Governor's residence, Christianborg Castle. There was a very large attendance of all the notabilities in Accra, African, British and Foreign, and there I made the acquaintance of many people. The Governor gave me an engagement to meet him at 10-30 on the next morning. One thing I noticed—the Governor's Bodyguard of African Lancers, who were drawn up in lines in the premises of the Castle, at the entrance and along the stairs, in honour of the afternoon function, were dressed almost exactly in the uniform of one of our Indian Lancers' Regiments in the British Indian Army, with *puggrees*, *puttees* and pennoned lances and everything such as used to be in the former military dress in India. Returning home to the house of the Raja Sahib, I had a long conversation with him about our culture and about Indian and African conditions in general, which was quite instructive for me, enabling me to know more about the situation in the Gold Coast.

30 July 1954 : Accra

I had some interesting conversations with the House Boys in the Guest House where I was stopping. They were all of them men from Nigeria, belonging to the Ijaw tribe, and they were all nominally Christians. It was quite interesting for me to note that a large number of Nigerians, Yorubas, Igbos (or Ibos), Ibibios, Ijaws and even Hausas were to be found in Gold Coast working in various walks of life—as domestic servants, as clerks, as small merchants, as watchmen, etc. They all spoke English. Although house-boys, or domestic servants, they were keen on improving their status by passing University or College examinations; and incidentally I discovered that to a man they had great faith in charms and hidden powers which could be exerted for the good or bad of man—i. e. in magic and witch-craft. They also thought that the Indian people were great adepts in occult and mystic lore and in secret powers, and one of them naively asked me if I as an Indian could procure for him “brain pills” to enable him to pass his examinations easily, and even obtain from India a ring which could make him invisible. He and his friends were distinctly sorry and rather disappointed when I told them that sensible men all over the world did not believe in all this hocus-pocus, and it was all useless and a waste of money.

In the morning I dictated to one of the stenographers in the Indian Commissioner's office an account of my interview with Mr. Hadow on the previous day, to keep a record which might be helpful later. Then I had to go to the Liberian Consulate to arrange for my Liberian visa. The Consul, Mr. Llyod Kelly Whisnant, a full-blooded African of “Americo-Liberian” stock, was a charming gentleman, and after my business was done without any difficulty or delay, I had quite an intimate and informative conversation with Mr. Whisnant about cultural conditions and problems in his country and in West Africa in general.

Next I went to Christianborg Castle for my interview with the Governor, and there I had half an hour with him—it was a conversation on various topics. I could immediately realize the Governor's great sympathy for the West African people. My conversation was mostly along lines of the previous day's with Mr. Hadow. It was about the character and mentality of the West African people, their sense of rhythm and colour—their emotionalism which was sometimes in conflict with sustained action, and their ready acceptance of English institutions and ways because they did not have much of their own. I discussed with him also the question of language in West Africa, and I saw how some of the problems were similar both in India and in West Africa. The tradition in India of English studies and English learning was also a matter on which we had some talk, and about the importance of English in general all over the world. The Governor was pleased to hear that my experience has been that the Indian personnel in the Commissioner's office and the Commissioner and the Rani Sahiba were quite happy to be in Gold Coast, and the rank and file in the office had no grouse against the country and its people; and the Governor also testified to his warm appreciation of the fine qualities as a man of Raja Sri Rameswara Rao and also of the Rani Sahiba, and he spoke in highly appreciative terms of the Indian merchants also.

In the meanwhile, in reply to enquiries and suggestions made by Raja Rameswara Rao, some tentative programme was received from the Nigerian authorities about my visit to Nigeria, and this I discussed with the Raja Sahib, and finalized my programme in Nigeria. At mid-day we had to go to Achimota for lunch with Prof. and Mrs. Lawrence, and we had a very interesting time talking to a highly cultured man of science who had a genuine love for the African people. In the afternoon, I had a meeting with one of the Ministers, Mr. Archie Casely-Hayford. He was

an African, like all the other Ministers, but exceedingly business-like in my conversation with him. He spoke to the point on certain matters about which I took down some notes. He said he would like these subjects to be presented before our Prime Minister for his consideration, and the subjects which we discussed were these :

(1) Conserving our raw materials both in India and West Africa for our mutual benefit in the future ;

(2) Interchange of commodities between Gold Coast and India (jute and jute-bags from India : Gold Coast did not as yet have anything special to offer to India by way of her own produce or manufactures—since India had no need for cocoa from Gold Coast) ;

(3) Financial assistance mutually ;

(4) Technical assistance—cultural exchange (the newly established Department of African Studies in the University of Delhi, which I mentioned to him, should have some anthropological and other scholars from West Africa) ; and

(5) Exchange of students.

[ I had occasion to meet Mr. Casely-Hayford later in India and again in Australia, in 1957 and 1959, when he like myself took part in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference as a delegate, and he expressed on both these occasions, as before, his warm appreciation of India and of the Indian approach to international problems, particularly with regard to Imperialism and Colonialism, Foreign Aggression and *Apartheid*. ]

My tour-programme in Nigeria was finalized, and the Commissioner's office sent it to Lagos in Nigeria for information and action by the Nigerian authorities who kindly undertook to help me in this matter. My programme for Liberia, after finishing my Nigeria trip, was also completed.

In the afternoon I met at his residence Sir Emmanuel Quist, a venerable African gentleman of 76 years of age,

who was one of the leaders of West Africa in politics. He was then the Speaker of the Gold Coast Parliament. I had a very interesting polite conversation with him, about the procedure of the Gold Coast Parliament, about Gold Coast students abroad, and matters of that type.

In the evening Raja Rameswara Rao gave a dinner at his residence which enabled me to meet a number of prominent people both among Africans and the British as well as Indians in Accra. There were some of the Ministers like Mr. Gbedemah and Mr. Casely-Hayford with their wives, Sir Emmanuel Quist and Lady Quist, Mr. Hadow, Commodore and Mrs. James who were both in India (the Commodore being connected with the Damodar Valley Corporation), the Chief Justice of Accra and his wife, the Consul-General of Liberia, and Mr. Sarwani, Chairman of the Indian Merchants' Association, and some others. I was given opportunity to meet and converse on various matters with most of the guests individually.

31 July—2 August, 1954 : Accra to Kumasi and back

Kumasi is the culture-centre of the Ashanti people and the city where lives the scion of the Ruling House of the Ashantis. The Gold Coast people belong mostly to the great Akan group of tribes, and they speak dialects of the same language, like Fanti and Ashanti (Twi or Chwi—the latter is gradually attaining to the position of a common language for Gold Coast). The city of Accra is situated in the border of the Gan country where the Gan language is current, which is different from the Akan speeches. The Ashantis have a belief in the mystic power of the *Golden Stool* or Throne of the Ashanti Royal House which is supposed to have come down from heaven and to represent the soul of the Ashanti people. The scion of the Royal House is known as the *Asantehene*—he is Otunfuo Sir Osei Agyamen Prempeh II, K.B.E. The



Prime Minister of Gold Coast, Dr. Nkrumah, belongs also to the Akan group of peoples, though his dialect is different slightly from the Ashanti.

It was a little less than one hour's journey by air from Accra to Kumasi. There is a railway line from Accra to Kumasi, but this metre gauge line would have taken one whole day. I went to Kumasi for two days' stay only, and I was put up with a prominent Indian (Sindhi) merchant, Sri Tirathdas Nankani, who has got four or five establishments in Kumasi town. The Indian merchants here handle not only curios but also general stores and textiles, and their shops are the only departmental stores in Kumasi. Sri Wassia Daswani, another young Indian merchant (also from Sindh), who is very popular here (well-known as "Baboo"), and who is remarkably intelligent and highly cultured, made arrangements for my stay and visit to important persons and places in Kumasi.

The Acting Regional Commissioner, Mr. Gass, who was quite a young man, was requested to act as a sort of host to me in Kumasi. He took me to see the new University Buildings of Kumasi, and its agricultural section, and I had tea with the Registrar at his bungalow where I met some of the Professors. Later in the afternoon Mr. Gass took me to see the *Asantehene*. I found him to be an oldish gentleman with a benign face, but rather reticent in speech. My conversation was mainly with regard to Ashanti culture and religion, and how the Ashantis were reacting under the English impact. But unfortunately I could not get enough light on many matters I was interested to know.

On the next day, August 1 1954, through Mr. Wassia Daswani's friendly offices, I was able to make the acquaintance of a interesting Ashanti gentleman, Mr. Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen, an anthropologist with foreign training, who was Secretary of the Ashanti Cultural Centre (*Asante Amannee Ahyiae*) and Member of the Ashanti

State Council in Kumasi. He was a staunch nationalist, although a Christian, and through him, I was enabled to meet some Ashanti Chiefs. I was taken by Mr. Kyerematen with Sri Daswani and Sri Nankani to the residence of a local chief, Nana Boakyie Agyemen Bampana Bamu, and was introduced to him. Sri Daswani took a photograph of our party with the Chief and his family, and they were sincerely pleased to meet so many Indians. Mr. Kyerematen then took me to see the Ashanti Cultural Centre with its new library, and brought me to the mausoleum of the old kings of Ashanti. But as a special permission from the *Asantehene* was required to go inside to see the graves, I could not do that. I was photographed with some of the Ashanti gentlemen, and I most gladly wore the Ashanti "native cloth" or cloak, which was a plain unsewn piece of cloth worn toga-fashion. Its gorgeous colours, and the classical style of draping it round the body, make it a very simple and attractive costume. In the morning I gave a talk to the Sindhi workers from the various Indian firms. They met, some 40 of them, in the local Y.M.C.A., and I spoke about what the Indian ideal was and how our merchant friends also had their responsibilities, both to themselves and to the Africans and others with whom they came in contact.

From Accra, Mr. du Sautoy, Acting Director of Social Welfare, who is an Englishman, as mentioned before, had sent information to Mr. Owen Barton, Social Welfare Department Officer in Kumasi District, to help me to see the work of this department. Following Mr. Barton's advice through a telephone message, I went to a village called Juoben, about 24 miles from Kumasi, and some of my Sindhi friends accompanied me.

[ A detailed account of this visit of mine to Juoben and my experience of a day in an Ashanti village will be found in an Appendix at the end of this Chapter. ]

In the evening Mr. Gass, the acting Regional Commissioner, gave a sherry-party at his residence, where a select group of people, three Educational and other Officers, all Englishmen, with their wives, and some African and Indian Ladies and Gentlemen were called. I went to this party in Indian dress, *dhoti* and *kurta* and a batik scarf and sandals, and this evidently was unexpected, and created a mild surprise if not sensation, as I could feel it. We talked mostly on polite nothings, and somehow this gathering seemed to be a little stiff and formal.

2 August, 1954: Accra

This day was a bank holiday in Kumasi, but most of the Indian shops were open in the morning and I had to accompany Sri Nankani to make a round of the Indian shops, forming the individual acquaintances of their proprietors or managers. It was interesting to find that the Indians were doing good business. I was quite struck by the large number of customers from French Territory from both the East and West of Gold Coast coming to Kumasi to make purchases, particularly of textiles, from these Sindhi shops. Some of these French Africans were quite pleased when I spoke to them in French, but most of them knew English as well.

Christian and Muslim merchants and shop-keepers from Lebanon and Syria were in complete possession of the retail as well as wholesale trade in textiles and other lines in West Africa, but the Syrians were not popular because of their unsympathetic ways with the Africans as a black people. Without this prejudice, and with imagination, the Indian merchants have quickly made friends with Africans, and, as I was glad to see, have built up a reputation for fair dealing. Most of them speak the local language. I did not have the pleasure of meeting him and his family, but I was told that in Accra there was at least one Indian

merchant who had married an African young lady, and they were quite a happy house-hold, and both were popular among Indians as well as Africans.

I returned to Accra in the morning by 11-30. I had to stay for one more night in Accra, and now I was guest of the Raja Sahib at his house. There I met at lunch Swami Nihseyyasananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who, on his way to Paris to relieve Swami Siddheswarananda, who was ailing, from his post there, had made a detour of West Africa to see the conditions there. The Indian Community this afternoon gave a reception to meet me in the Air-port Restaurant in Accra, and Swamiji was also there. I had to speak on the ideals of India that were being set up by the Indian merchants in West Africa.

Sir Leslie MacCarthy, an African gentleman, originally from Sierra Leone, is an ex-Chief-Justice of Gold Coast, and I had a most interesting conversation with him in the Raja Sahib's residence for about an hour, primarily in connexion with the race-movements in West Africa and with Ashanti life and culture. It appeared that Sir Leslie was quite familiar with the anthropological background in India also, and had read one or two of my papers.

In the evening I met at dinner in his home Dr. J. B. Danquah, a very eminent scholar of Gold Coast. In politics, he was prominent as a Leader of the Opposition (his politics was nationalistic, but he wanted the people to go slow, and that was not in accordance with the present *tempo* of the people in Africa). This was a most interesting experience, this dinner in the house of a cultured African gentleman who would be an intellectual leader in any country; and here I met a number of very fine people, all Africans, and had a most interesting conversation which enabled me to know a little more of conditions in culture and politics in this part of West Africa. I wanted Dr. Danquah to formulate for us his

views on "Africanism", as he had already published his book on the Ashanti Conception of God. Mrs. Danquah is well-known in West Africa as a writer, and some of her short stories in English which I have read are beautiful indeed.

3 August, 1954 : From Accra to Lagos

This morning the Raja Sahib took me to see some of the more interesting places in Accra which I did not see before. One was the Community Centre Building for Social and Educational work among the different peoples of the country. There was on the top of a hall in this building a mosaic on the outer wall giving the representations of the three important peoples of Gold Coast with an inscription in the Gan language, in Roman capital letters with some special signs, *kwe bònìehi kè nyemime i fee ekome kè hi si s ilè*, which meant "Behold, how good and pleasing it is for brothers to live together in Unity". There I saw interesting bas-reliefs in wood along the traditional style of Gold Coast wood-carving.

This morning it was possible for me to have an interview with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the Prime Minister of Gold Coast, which lasted for nearly 30 minutes. It took place in his car, as he did not want to be disturbed in the course of this talk. It was a great honour, and the Prime Minister's guards saw that no one came near the car while he granted me this interview. Among other matters, I broached before Dr. Nkrumah the necessity of formulating what may be called an *Africanism*—the African *Weltanschauung*, or the African Way of Thought and Way of Life. The world ought to know what Africa—African Africa or Black Africa—stands for, and how the African attitude to life and things can have a value for the world. Dr. Nkrumah said that it was a new view-point, and he was interested in it as a student of Anthropology. I tried

to give my own ideas about this matter, and the Prime Minister expressed his genuine interest in this regard.

The same day I left at about 3 o'clock by the West African Airways Corporation plane for Lagos. It was a very fine journey, and flying along the sun-lit coast we arrived at Lagos at about 6 P. M. (Nigerian time).

At Lagos some prominent Sindhi gentlemen, belonging to the firm of Messrs K. Chellaram & Sons (Nigeria) Ltd., were at the airport to receive me. I found also a letter from Mr. T. V. O. Smith, Assistant Secretary, External Affairs, who was arranging my tour-programme in Nigeria. I was informed that a room was reserved for me at the Government Hostel at Ikoyi in the outskirts of Lagos. It was quite a comfortable place, but I could not meet Mr. Smith that night. I was taken by my Sindhi friends for dinner at their place. I found that my trip to Benin would be too expensive, and at the same time useless because it would take a good deal of time for the day-long motor journey to Benin, and I would not be able to stay there long enough. So I abandoned Benin and made certain alterations in my programme, which enabled me to see only a part of the Yoruba country in Nigeria within the week at my disposal.

#### 4 August 1954 : Lagos

In the morning Mr. T. V. Smith, Assistant Secretary in the External Affairs, Nigerian Government, a young Englishman who was in correspondence with the Commissioner for India in Accra and had arranged my tour-programme in Nigeria, met me at Ikoyi Guest House, and we settled the programme. Benin, as it was decided, was cut out from my itinerary, although intimation had been sent already to the District Officer at Benin to help me and to be my host there. It was decided that I could only spend 3 days at Ibadan and Ife which were centres of

Yoruba life. It meant that I would be able to see only a part of the Yoruba country : and Nigeria is too vast a country to be seen within one week.

Nigeria is naturally divided into three areas. North of the Niger river and its tributary the Benueh is an extensive part of the country which is inhabited mainly by the Hausa people in addition to a number of other tribes—the Nupe, the Bauchi and the various Chad lake tribes. The population, numbering over 16 millions in this area, is very largely, if not almost entirely, Muhammadan. In the Southern parts, separated by the Niger river after it bends South, when it had received its tributary the Benueh, we have Western Nigeria to the West and South of the Niger river and Eastern Nigeria to the East of Niger and South of the Benueh. In the West we have the home-land of the Yoruba people who number some 5 millions together with some smaller tribes like the Edo or Bini, the people who built up the great art of the city of Benin. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, to the East of the Niger river, the predominant people numerically are Ibos or Igbos, who also number 5 millions or more, and there are smaller tribes like the Ijaws and the Ibibios and others. The Yorubas are perhaps 40% Christians, 40% Muslims, and the rest Pagans, following their old traditional religion ; but it has not resolved itself into a sort of contest between Christianity and Islam among the Yorubas, at least outwardly. It is not unlikely that a religious rivalry has already started, although it is still below the surface. The University of Ibadan has built a Christian chapel, non-denominational, for its Christian students, and a mosque for its Muslim students. But no one has thought of a temple, or hall for the Pagans—and the Pagans themselves appear to be indifferent. At the present moment, however, both the Muslims and the Christians are united with the Pagans in having developed a strong national sense, actuated by

which they are seeking to preserve most of the outward appurtenances of their culture, like their native dress, their traditions, dances, folk-lore etc. In the Eastern tract the Ibos, the dominant people, are now mainly Christian. Both the Yorubas and the Ibos are very well advanced in education—English is fairly well understood all over the Eastern and Western tracts, and most of the teachers, clerks and officers in the lower grades in the Public Services of Nigeria are recruited from among the Ibos and the Yorubas as well as the Ijaws and the Ibibios.

I selected to spend the three days that I could spare among the Yorubas because I was more familiar with this people than with the others ; and besides, the two Ministers from Nigeria, Dr. Obafemi Awolowo and Mr. Augustus Akinloye, who had come to India and whose acquaintance I made in Calcutta, were both Yorubas. I had also made some friends among Yoruba people, during my student days in London, 34 years ago, but they have mostly passed away. I also wanted to see how Paganism was making a stand against the onslaught of both Christianity and Islam, as I had made some study of Yoruba tradition and religion. I was not able to spend any time in Eastern Nigeria among the Ibos and others, although I made friends with Ben Enwonwu, who is an Ibo, and who is now the best known sculptor of Nigeria with an international reputation. I could also spend two nights at Kano, one of the centres of the Hausas. This short stay was therefore very unsatisfying, but nevertheless it was something.

I stayed at Lagos on the 4th. In the morning, through the kindness of Sri Rupchand, Manager of Chellaram's, I was taken to see Mr. Lowden, the officer who was presiding over the British Council at Lagos. I obtained some information from him about the cultural and artistic situation in Lagos, and he advised me to make the



acquaintance of Mr. John Danford, Artist and Sculptor, who was the Regional Director of the British Council at Ibadan. I paid a visit to some interesting places in Lagos town, and made some purchases of books. I saw Mr. Smith in his office, and, according to the programme drawn up, he undertook to purchase my air-tickets from Lagos to Kano and from Kano back to Gold Coast, to be paid by me through the Indian Commissioner at Accra.

As in other countries, there was an interesting Co-operative Stores where Nigerian Arts and Crafts were for sale. I made the acquaintance of a Nigerian sculptor in wood, Mr. A. Orishadikpe, who was running a Nigerian Art Centre where one could purchase paintings and sculpture by Nigerian artists.

At 1 P.M. the A.D.C. to Sir Hugo Marshall, Deputy Governor of Gold Coast, came to take me to the Government House for lunch. The Governor, Sir John Macpherson, was away in England, and he was expected to be back to Lagos within a couple of days, and in the meanwhile Sir Hugo Marshall was acting as Governor for the Colony. He did me the honour of the place by asking me to lunch. Sir Hugo Marshall and his Secretary, a tall and rather silent person, and myself were the people who sat down to lunch. We had a good deal of polite small talk, and what I could gather from the conversation (I am speaking from my impression only) was that the Americans were not liked for their politics and their methods, although there were a good many Americans who had made themselves popular by their *bonhomie*. I left at about 2.40, quite happy to have formed the acquaintance of two capable British Administrative Officers.

In the afternoon I had further excursions within Lagos town itself, and found in the heart of the native town a Benin Wood-Carvers' Union. Here a number of Benin artists were preparing the characteristic Benin carvings in

ebony wood, mostly of conventional figures, busts of African men and women, walking sticks with carved heads at the top, lamp-stands with African *motifs* like the figure of a mother with her child tied to her back, etc.

A young African gentleman, quite an intelligent and interesting person, took me to the carvers' shop. I met him quite accidentally in a neighbouring street. He was a person from Sierra Leone, and his name was J. A. Makoli. He made friends with me when he found that I was an Indian, and expressed his very great admiration for India which appeared to be quite genuine. He took me round a good part of the native African town in Lagos, and particularly through the interesting market-place. I found a large number of Hausa people in Lagos market, doing a good deal of the small trade both in textiles and in special art manufactures of the Northern Muslim area. I was taken to a medicine-man's stall where I found a person with a rather smelly spread-out of all sorts of things required by an African medicine-man or witch-doctor. There was an assortment of little red monkey's heads dried up and shrivelled, and skulls of all sorts, and human bones, skins and feathers of various kinds, dried lizards, and small stones and pebbles and other articles the use of which was known only to a witch-doctor. This man was glad to hear from me the names of some of the Yoruba Gods, and he offered to sell me one of the primitive stone celts, which are known as the "stones of the Thunder-God Shango", for 10 shillings, and he said he would be glad to take me to his home to show me wooden statuettes of both Shango and one of his wives Oya, evidently with an eye to sell them to me if I cared to buy them. In the shops I found numerous kinds of head-cloth which the women of Southern Nigeria invariably wear round their heads like a turban—a good deal of it comes from Madras, and is hand-woven in all bright colours,

blue predominating. I came to know more about this kind of textile business from Chellaram's at both Lagos and Ibadan. After about an hour, Makoli, who was an electrician by trade and was very keen on coming to India, took leave of me.

At Chellaram's place I came to know something about the business that the Indians were doing in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria. Messrs. Chellaram was the biggest Indian concern possibly in the whole of West Africa, and they employed in their offices a large number of people, including a good many of local Yorubas. Their Head Clerk is a very capable Yoruba gentleman named Mr. Josephus Oluwole Majola. The boys and menial staff are all Yorubas.

In the afternoon I went to see a Yoruba Chief whom I had met in London during my student days in 1921. He was one of the 12 "White-Cap Chiefs" of Lagos and Southern Nigeria—Chief Oluwa. He has his home in one of the suburbs of Lagos. Thirty-three years ago he had gone to London along with Mr. Herbert Macaulay, then already an old man, to fight a case in the British Privy Council against the Nigerian Government regarding some lands which were unjustly taken over from him without any compensation. Mr. Herbert Macaulay (who passed away in 1945) was one of the leaders of the Nigerian Nationalistic Movement, and his political ideal and organization have now been taken over by Dr. Nnamadi Azikiwe, who is an Ibo by tribe and who is the great leader of Eastern Nigeria. In fact, the President of Liberia Mr. Tubman, the Prime Minister of Gold Coast Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and Messrs. Awolowo of West Nigeria and Azikiwe of East Nigeria are the most popular and the strongest leaders of British and Independent West Africa. The Chief, thanks to the intelligent support of Mr. Macaulay, finally won his case in London. He is a Muslim,

and I had first seen him on the occasion of the day of the Muslim feast of 'Id al-Fitr at the mosque at Woking near Camberley in Surrey, in England, where I was invited to be present by a Muslim friend from the Panjab who was in the School of Oriental Studies in London with me. The Chief was also accompanied by his son, who was a handsome young man and whom I had found in his home dressed in the African "cloth", making him look like a stately bronze statue dressed in the ancient Roman way. The Chief was now 86, and looked hale and hearty. He was a very pious man, and he had built a mosque in the courtyard of his house with an Imam who was a Yoruba. I met his son also when I went to his home in Lagos. He was now nearly 60 and yet he maintained a good deal of the handsome physique and appearance of his youth. Chief Oluwa was genuinely pleased to meet me, and his son acted as interpreter because the Chief did not speak English. This was a very interesting meeting, and I was glad to see him in good health and in full possession of his faculties. I was told that the Chief was a staunch nationalist who had suffered considerably under the unsympathetic British Officers because of his nationalistic sentiments.

In the evening I was taken to see the Broadcast House in Lagos where there was a very remarkable fresco by Enwonwu with a futuristic assemblage of masks, dancing figures of girls in a line and other distinctive 'Africanesque' things, all these making the whole composition rather striking in both line and colour. The composition was modernistic European, and very much sophisticated. There was also a bas-relief by the same artist, showing an Ibo, a Yoruba and a Hausa, three of the most important tribal groups of Nigeria, standing side by side.

5 August 1954 : Lagos—Ibadan

To-day after paying hostel charges at Ikoyi, and changing some money, I started in one of Messrs. Chellaram's cars for Ibadan which was some 110 miles from Lagos. It took over 3½ hours to reach there. We passed through the town of Abeokuta on our way to Ibadan. Through the kindness of Sri Rupchand, it was arranged that I would be received by their Manager at Ibadan, Sri Jhamatmal. Sri Jhamatmal, immediately after my arrival, took me to the residence of Dr. Awolowo who was the Chief Minister for Western Nigeria and who was one of the two Nigerian Ministers who came on a good-will mission to India during 1952-1953.

Ibadan is one of the biggest towns of Africa, and unlike most other towns it developed entirely among the Africans as a native African town. Its present population would be about 200,000. The town really was in olden days a vast assemblage of typical African hutments, but now it is quite an up-to-date town of Africa, particularly in its newer quarters. It has now a good number of buildings and most amenities of modern civilization like underground drainage, tap-water, electricity, etc. I received a most cordial reception from Dr. Awolowo in his house, and I came to know that I was to be his guest for the first night that I would spend at Ibadan. I was taken to Dr. Awolowo's own home in the heart of the city where I was to have lunch with him and his family ; after lunch, I was to go to the new official residence which has been built for the Chief Minister, where Dr. Awolowo would be spending the first night with his family to keep me company. I had a long and intimate conversation with Dr. Awolowo, and I met Mrs. Awolowo, a charming Yoruba lady beaming with friendliness and full of friendly smiles ; and I also saw their five children. The lunch was quite sumptuous and it was in European style, with just a little suggestion of

Africa in one or two dishes which made it one of the best lunches I had ever eaten. Dr. Awolowo told me that he was 45, but he looked much younger. Mrs. Awolowo was to leave immediately after lunch to be present at the funeral gathering for a cousin who had suddenly died, and she was to proceed to a place 90 miles away from Ibadan, and she was to return the same evening.

After lunch I was taken to the Chief Minister's new residence and took rest there for some time. In the afternoon there was a tea-party arranged by Dr. Awolowo to enable me to meet local personalities. There were a number of Chiefs and some Professors; and owners of concerns as well as assistants from among the Indian merchants in Ibadan were also invited. I was very much interested to make the acquaintance of Prof. Ayo Ogunshye, whose subject was Economics, and he taught at the University College of Ibadan. I met some Ministers, and one of the important Chiefs who was also a Minister. The Lieutenant-Governor of West Nigeria, Mr. C. M. Shankland and Mrs. Shankland also came, and there was a group photograph at the end of the function, in addition to any number of photos which were taken as I was introduced to various persons.

After this tea, I was taken to see the old University site and the new University buildings. There were fine students' dormitories. At that time the University was closed, but there were extra-mural classes being held in which advanced students from all over the country, including Northern Nigeria, had come to participate. When I was being taken through one of the buildings, I found a young Professor talking in perfect English on conciliation (and not arbitration) in labour disputes, while Prof. Ogunshye was presiding. I was invited to sit down to the lecture, and after it was over I had to make a little speech, and the sentiments of friendship on behalf of India which I

expressed were very much appreciated by Prof. Ogunsheye and others, who spoke also in glowing terms about India. In the evening I had a chance meeting with Mr. Akinloye, Minister for Agriculture, who was the other Nigerian Minister who had come to India. After that I went to Mr. John Danford's house, the British Council Officer, who showed me his collection of African art and his pictures of African life, and photos of the life-size bronze statue of Imotan, the famous African queen of the 17th century which he had made at the request of the citizens of Benin and which had already been erected at a public place. Mr. Danford enabled me to enlarge my ideas about African art, and it was in fact a most informative and a delightful experience to see this British artist doing his bit for international understanding through Art in West Africa.

I had dinner with my Indian friends, which was as usual quite a long business. I returned to Dr. Awolowo's official residence for the night very late, but as he was also getting ready to go to bed and it was nearing mid-night, and as I was also very much tired, I could not have any close conversation with him, much as both of us have been looking forward to it.

6 August 1954 : Ibadan—Ife

I had breakfast with Dr. Awolowo, and we talked about many things. There was something like a "Pakistan" developing in Nigeria, and Dr. Awolowo thought that it had not become so very acute as yet, but he and others did not lose sight of it. He thought that for the present, in the interest of the Yorubas on the one hand and the Igbos on the other, whose desire for complete independence was kept in check by the Muslim Hausas and others in the North (as these latter were apprehensive that they would be nowhere before the more educated and advanced Southerners), it would be best for the South to part

company with the North by dividing the country into more or less self-contained provinces. But the Muslim problem was not acute as yet for Yorubaland. He thought that a federation which was to take effect from the 1st October would be the best solution for the present; and if the Hausas did not want independence, the Southerners would certainly go ahead with that idea. I gave to Dr. Awolowo some of my papers and other publications and some typical works giving an idea of the Indian point of view (which was a sort of enlightened secularism in the state, with the background of spirituality and faith) and Dr. Awolowo expressed his great pleasure in receiving them. I then took leave of the Awolowo family.

I found out that Dr. Awolowo's children were all given Yoruba names, which I took down with their meanings. The culture of a people can frequently be gauged from the names, personal and otherwise, that are in use among them. Yoruba nationalism as well as a deep Christian faith are both found in the names which Dr. and Mrs. Awolowo have given to their five children. The eldest child, a son, aged 15, has been named *Olushegun*, which means 'the Lord conquers'. The others, in order, have been given similar names: a daughter, 13, *Omotola* 'Child as good as Wealth'; a son, 11, *Oluwele* 'the Lord enters our home'; a daughter, 9, *Aiyodele* 'Joy come into our home'; and the youngest, a daughter, *Olatokumbo*, 'Luck has come from beyond the Sea' (she was born when Dr. Awolowo qualified for the Bar in London).

Mr. Ado Thani, who was the Information Officer at Ibadan, was to arrange for my visit to Ife from Ibadan. He took me to meet one of the most intelligent young African Chiefs whom I had seen—he was a Minister without portfolio named Oba Aliyeluwa Ologbegi II Olowo of Owo. He was a tall slim young man, and he was quite an



enlightened person ; and he was dressed in his Chief's costume with an elephant's tail whisk in his hand. He was eager to continue the conversation, which unfortunately could last only for 10 minutes.

In my journey to Ife, some 56 miles away from Ibadan, Mr. Thani had arranged that a reporter, Mr. Mac Pepple, and a photographer, Mr. Bernard Akenabor—the former an Ibo by tribe and the latter Edo—would accompany me to take photographs and to report on my interviews with notabilities. Both of them were quite smart and intelligent young men. We started on our journey at about 10-30, and arrived at Ife about 2 hours later, through beautiful green and undulating country, with villages all over the way along a very fine road. Reaching Ife we went to the house of the Oni ; Oni is the title of the local Chief. The Oni of Ife was one of the religious heads of the Yoruba people in the olden times, and even now, although he has formally become a Christian, he retains his position. The anomaly of it does not seem to strike anybody. Sir Adesoji Aderemi is an old man, and inspite of his education and several visits to Europe and his Christianity, he felt still in his heart of hearts a genuine Yoruba, and he maintained his connexion with the old religion by appointing priests and making through a proxy the customary sacrifices to the different shrines. At his residence I was very well received, and the District Officer, Colonel Brett, came to the Oni's palace and met me there. I understood that I was to be Colonel Brett's guest during my one night's stay at Ife. We got to be very friendly. Colonel Brett is an Irishman, and he is comparatively young, being about 45 ; and for 19 years he was an officer in the Indian Army. He was connected with the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles, and it appeared that he knew a brother-in-law of mine who was a junior officer in the same regiment in which he was a senior officer. He remembered Second-Lieutenant K. S. Mukherji.

Mrs. Brett was a very charming woman, and I was enabled through their genuine spirit of hospitality to be immediately at home with them.

After lunch at Colonel Brett's house, towards afternoon I came back to the Oni's Palace, and was photographed in my Indian costume, both with the Oni and Colonel Brett. Ife is now famous in the artistic world because of the wonderful bronze heads, genuine specimens of African art of about a thousand years ago, which were unearthed when some excavations were being made in the grounds of the Oni's palace. These in their striking realism compare most favorably with the best that the ancient Greeks or the Renaissance Italians produced in the way of modelling and bronze casting, and form a most striking evidence of the high culture of the West Africans at such a fairly early date. These bronze heads created quite a stir in Europe and elsewhere, and now they are very carefully housed in a beautiful little museum which the Oni has erected for this purpose. Here I saw these artistic treasures along with some very striking terracotta figures and fragments which were kept there. The terracottas were also beautiful and they consisted of heads as well as of fragments of the human body, and some mouldings of the feet which were all that remained of some full statues were most striking in their delicate beauty.

I was anxious to see some of the Yoruba pagan temples or shrines, but it seemed that my stay of a few hours was not enough. I was told about the American Professor of Anthropology, Dr. W. R. Bascom, who had spent a whole year in Ife to study the Yoruba religion, and I felt quite ashamed for my hurry when I heard of this. I was nevertheless taken to see a most interesting series of shrines within a sacred grove. Colonel Brett also accompanied me, and he, too, was feeling a keen interest in it. I need not describe all that I saw there. The temple

area or wood was deserted at the time, and the various altars would be in use only on special days. There were other temples, but it struck me that somehow the Oni was not very enthusiastic about my visiting them. Colonel Brett took me to see another little temple, that of Oduduwa, the great Mother Goddess of the Yorubas. These temples and shrines seemed to be rather neglected, and they bore eloquent testimony to the moribund state of Yoruba religion as something which lacked whole-hearted devotion from its adherents, although most of the conceptions and ideologies of the old religion and its cults and practices still maintained their place in the hearts of the people.

Colonel Brett took me to see a most interesting institution at Ife—a fairly big hospital with 120 beds which was being run very ably by members of an American sect, the Saturday Adventists. A very pleasant and sincere American gentleman, Dr. S. A. Nagel, a pious believer in the Saturday Adventist doctrines and in the literal interpretation of the Bible, and dreadfully earnest about it, took us round, and he gave us a number of photo postcards of the hospital. He introduced me to the two American sisters and the other American doctor who were there. This was indeed a case of silent philanthropy among a strange people, which called for the highest commendation.

In the evening the two young men of the Information Service who had come with me in their own office jeep and took photos left for Ibadan, and the reporter took a long statement from me about my visit to Lagos, Ibadan and Ife and about my reactions to what I saw.

In the evening in Colonel Brett's house there was a little sherry-party, where I was enabled to meet some interesting gentry of Ife—there was a retired African Judge, an old Chief and an African Police Officer. We exchanged our visiting cards. These gentlemen were Yoruba nationalists

all of them, but they did not appear to evince much interest in their native traditions and culture and religion. At dinner with the Bretts in the evening I met a fine man, Father Kane, a Scotch Roman Catholic monk who was doing evangelical work in these parts, and he was quite a hearty sort of a person with whom it was a delight to talk.

7 August, 1954 : Ife : Return to Ibadan

This was a perfect day with a number of most interesting experiences which I had been looking forward to for quite a long time. After breakfast Colonel Brett accompanied me to the house of the Oni. I found him in the midst of a large number of his subjects, and he was presiding over a sort of a court in which cases were brought to him for decision—this particular morning they referred to boundaries of some fields. I noticed that his subjects, whenever they spoke to him or came near to him, made some profound obeisances, sometimes prostrating themselves at full length before him. The Oni very kindly arranged for my visit to the house of the Head of the Priests (whose official title was the *Araba*) of the God Ifa. The ordinary priests are known as *Babalawos* or 'Fathers of Mystery'. The situation for the pagan religion appears to have become quite bizarre. The *Araba* or Head Priest, who was appointed to his post by the Oni himself, had a Christian name—his name was James Awosope, and he was a comparatively young man. Although Head Priest, he made the usual prostrations and salutations to the Oni when he was summoned. And he was asked by the Oni to show me how divination was done under the auspices of the God Ifa, who had the power to tell the future through his priests to those who offered him sacrifice. An intelligent Yoruba gentleman dressed in European clothes, whose name as I learnt was Mr. Rufus Awojodu, who also saluted and prostrated himself before the Oni,

was to be our interpreter, as the Araba did not speak English. Before going to see the actual work of divination in the Araba's house, I gave to the Oni some books on Indian philosophy and culture as published by the Ramakrishna Mission, as I had given one such book to Colonel Brett, who looked through it and said he would like to read it with genuine interest and requested me to autograph it. Colonel Brett had come out this morning in his Irish kilt made of dark chocolate cloth, without any tartan design but with a sporran. I took final leave from the Oni, and went with Colonel Brett and Mr. Awojodu to the house of the Araba.

I need not describe in detail the ceremony for which I had to spend 12 shillings. The Araba sat down with his paraphernalia surrounded by his acolytes, and my question I was to put silently to a shilling which I handed over to him. He did the customary manipulations with 16 palm-nuts in his hands, occasionally drawing lines with his fingers on a round wooden tray covered with some kind of powder, and then after 10 minutes of this sort of ceremonial his acolytes one by one began to suggest certain things which according to them related to the matter I had in mind. In most cases these were quite wide of the mark. But it appeared to me that in this manner, by having half a dozen men to speak on all possible topics which the enquirer might have in mind, they would finally hit upon the right question which was to be put before the God. In any case, the whole thing was quite interesting, a ceremonial of the African pagan religion in practice. Colonel Brett had never seen this kind of divination, and he was also very much interested.

I took leave from Colonel Brett in his office, and one of his constable-orderlies was asked to take me to see some other interesting places in Ife. This orderly, a smart young man named Gabriel Adewoyin first took me to his

family house. It was an immense compound with quite a large number of huts, and in it lived his father and his uncles, each with his several wives, and his brothers and cousins ; and when there was a marriage, the new wife had her separate hut. He volunteered the information that his father had 8 wives and he had 10 brothers and sisters born of the same mother. I asked him how they managed to feed so many mouths, and he said in a very simple manner that they had cocoa and palm-oil plantations. The entire compound was quite a village, and there were different places where cooking was going on. One of his uncles Mr. Sam Elufioye was a Babalawo. I was taken to his room through a number of courtyards and a kitchen where a large Yoruba meal was being cooked. It was a room with some chairs and mats and some furniture, and Mr. Elufioye agreed to sell me a couple of palm-nuts used in divination for 2 shillings and 6 pence. Gabriel introduced me to his father, and I saw also his wife, a very shy young Yoruba girl who made a pretty wife for her smart young husband, and Gabriel presented me with some specimens of Yoruba cloth, black and blue, woven by his wife. A little tip made him quite happy.

From Ife we returned to Ibadan by 12-40. It was Saturday, and on our way we passed through the Saturday Adventist Hospital where I took leave of Dr. Nagel who had just finished the service of his Church, because they observed Sabbath on Saturday and not on Sunday. He gave some medicine to the driver of my car, an experienced chauffeur named William who was an old employee of Chellaram's, as he was complaining of some pain in his chest.

Arriving at Ibadan I was received by Sri Jhamatmal at Chellaram's Stores. They had quite a large residential quarter behind their shop, as is often the case with the more prosperous Sindhi business houses. We had lunch,

and then I saw how Yoruba market-women doing retail trade in textiles were accustomed to make their purchases of Indian cloth—during the brisk season, when the arrival of a consignment of popular Madras head-cloth was announced. There was a dash for the most attractive patterns in Madras head-cloth among scores of Yoruba retail dealers, all women, who had come to the shop to purchase them. They were waiting in large groups for a long time before the shop would open. The Bakr-'Id festival was to take place on the 10th of August, and today was the 7th, and as there is a large Muslim population in Ibadan, this Madras head-cloth was very much in demand as an indispensable article of dress for Yoruba women. I watched for about an hour how the sales were conducted, and it was a most interesting thing and it spoke volumes for the business ability and the very human qualities of the Sindhi merchant community. Most of the members of the establishment who had been there for several years spoke fluent Yoruba, and it was quite easy to see that our Indian merchants were generally liked by their customers. From the conversations which I had with Sri Jhamatmal, I came to know a lot about how this business is carried on, with perfect advantage on either side. The Sindhis frequently sent popular African designs, with a harmonious combination of strong primary colours like blue, black, red and yellow in very vigorous and attractive patterns, to be copied by the handloom workers in Madras, and sometimes they themselves had new designs made on the basis of the African ones, which also became popular. I was shown some new designs with the symbols of the Nationalist Party which our Sindhi friends had got prepared in India, and these had also proved to be popular. I noticed that blue in various shades was the favourite colour.

Dr. Obafemi Awolowo had left Ibadan for the neighbouring town of Abeokuta, and the next day, on the 8th,

on my way to Lagos I was to meet him at Abeokuta in the house of the local Chief who was known by the title of *Alake*. Some function was to take place at Abeokuta in which Dr. Awolowo had to be present.

In the afternoon I had a most welcome visitor in the eminent Nigerian Sculptor Mr. Ben Enwonwu who was brought to my residence by Mr. Akenabor, the Information Service Photographer. I had a long talk with Mr. Enwonwu about his ideals in art and his achievements. Mr. Enwonwu was a slight man with a little beard, and he was about 34, as he told me, and he was full of enthusiasm for his work. He came from Onitsha and he was an Igbo by his tribe. He was a very devout Roman Catholic. From Chellaram's place, he took me in his car to the University College where he was making an image of Christ Resurrected with Mary Magdalene, in wood. This was to be placed in the University Chapel for Christian students. It was a most remarkable piece of work, and the face of Christ had a certain superb ascetic and mystic atmosphere about it, recalling some of the most profound medieval German-Gothic heads of Christ. Mary Magdalene with an ecstatic glow about her face was given the features of an African girl. After further talk with Mr. Enwonwu regarding the best way to develop sculpture as an expression of the African soul, I was taken to the house of Professor Ogunshye. There Mrs. Ogunshye, a slim young lady, and a charming hostess, gave us tea with some very tasty African pastry made by herself with flour-batter, mashed bananas, eggs and raisins fried in ground-nut oil. There were other guests also. Mrs. Ogunshye was dressed in the costume they are now evolving for women in Nigeria and West Africa, which appeared to be quite pretty, in its gay printed cloth skirt, and a loose, rather low-at-the-neck sleeveless jacket above the skirt reaching down well below the waist, with a coloured head-cloth



or kerchief, and sometimes a scarf in addition ; and when the printed design is really African, it is very distinctive. From there Mr. Enwonwu brought me back home, and it was settled that next morning he and I were to travel together to Abeokuta where he wanted to meet Mr. Awolowo.

In the evening I was asked by Sri Jhamatmal to give a short talk to the Sindhi young men and boys who were in the establishment. They were all very bright young people, and I talked informally to them for about 45 minutes on various aspects of our Indian life and culture and our problems both at home and abroad, and they became interested as they listened, and asked me questions. Our talk also drifted to the essential things in our Hindu philosophy and on the fundamentals of what may be called *Indianism* as the quintessence of Hinduism. Messrs. Chellaram's establishment had, as usual, a little chapel adorned with pictures of Hindu Deities and of Guru Nanak and other Saints and Teachers of India. There were copies of the *Sikh Adi Granth*, and of the Sanskrit *Bhagavad-Gita* with both Hindi and Sindhi translations, and it was a great joy for me to sit down there for a quarter of an hour.

8 August, 1954 : Ibadan—Abeokuta—Lagos

Early morning I participated with our Sindhi friends in their devotions in the Chapel. Most of the members of the staff came and sat down for a while and read some hymns and prayers from the *Adi Granth* or some other religious book. It is a very refreshing thing to note that even in the midst of their business occupations, the Sindhi-Hindu merchants have not forgotten the Great Reality that is behind life, and they approach It in the traditional way with which they are familiar. Some of them regularly abstain from flesh-meat on Mondays,

and some members of the establishment fast ( without taking any food or drink for the whole day ) at least twice a month, and have the ritual of Satya-Narayana (Vishnu) worship on these days. After early breakfast, I left Ibadan, taking my farewell from our kind and helpful Sindhi hosts and friends, for Abeokuta and Lagos in company with the sculptor Enwonwu. On the way, Enwonwu confided to me about his difficulties. The beauracratc set-up was not yet very sympathetic for the ideals and aspirations of the true Artist that Enwonwu was. It appeared that third-rate British people were drawing salaries to the tune of 1200 pounds a year and Enwonwu himself was getting something like one-third of the amount, and yet his exceptional qualities as an artist have been recognized everywhere. Enwonwu was 34 and he was still unmarried. He was anxious to take up some job where his talents as a creative artist might come into full play—he was now in the midst of office-work mostly, and this was not at all giving any chance to express himself in creative art.

While nearing Abeokuta we met Dr. and Mrs. Awolowo in their car returning from Abeokuta—they were on their way to Church, after which they would proceed to Ibadan. I took farewell of Dr. Awolowo and Mrs. Awolowo for the time being, with genuine expressions of mutual appreciation and hope and desire to renew our acquaintance again.

The city of Abeokuta is the home of a very important Yoruba prince whose title is *Alake*. The present Alake is 82, and I remembered having seen his photograph in a London illustrated paper 50 years ago in 1904 when he had visited England, an imposing figure in his colourful native dress. I was received by him in his Palace. This consists of two parts, a modern and up-to-date wing where he now lives, and the other is the old residence, more or less in the style of our thatched bungalows in Bengal in early

British times. I was received by him after some ceremony, some of his attendants first received me in a reception room downstairs, and then I was taken up and introduced to him in his library. I found him to be a tall and well-preserved, and quite a stately old gentleman, with an atmosphere of the true aristocrat about him. Dr. Awolowo and other friends had already spoken to him about me, and we could at once get into conversation about matters relating to Yoruba culture and art. I had to sign his Visitors' Book, and he was very pleased when I signed in the Nagari script also. He gave me as a memento of this visit to his palace a bit of ebony carving—the head of an African in high-relief, which was evidently of Yoruba workmanship. I was honoured with about half an hour's interview, in the course of which we were served with soft drinks. The Alake was a Christian gentleman, but like all Yorubas a staunch Nationalist, and I noticed a little gold crucifix in a slender chain round his neck.

Taking leave from him, I came down to see the old palace. It had a very spacious hall, like the *Pendopo* in Java or what we call the *Chandi-Mandapa* in Bengal. It had a series of pillars on one side, and these pillars were decorated with very fine Yoruba carving with groups of figures in several tiers. After this interview, Enwonwu, who was present, took leave, and he went back to Ibadan, and I returned to Lagos. In Abeokuta I purchased a few specimens of Yoruba decorative carving in relief on bits of calabash i. e. a gourd which is used as a water-vessel. I met a very smart young policeman on duty at the head of a bridge leading from the town of Abeokuta—the man, who spoke English, seemed to be very much interested in India.

Arriving at the residence of Sri Rupchand and his colleagues, I was informed that an interview with the Governor of Nigeria, Sir John Macpherson, was already

fixed for the same afternoon, and I was to be informed of it as soon as I returned from Ibadan. At 5 o'clock I arrived at the Government House with Sri Rupchand. Although I was told by the Private Secretary that the Governor was not keeping good health and the interview should be short, I found the Governor so much interested in our conversation and I was also so much impressed by him that the interview lasted for 45 minutes from 5 P.M. to 5.45 P.M. I found that the Governor was a very frank sort of a man with a very hearty laughter, and he was almost boyish in his enthusiasm for so many things. I noticed a remarkable thing about him—he had a writing pad, and in the course of our conversation he was taking down notes on what we were talking. This certainly showed an exact man. He was quite communicative about the problems which were facing the Nigerian people—problems which centred round tribe and religion. He was very much concerned at the proposal to divide the country into three federated states, North, West and East. He was apprehensive that there were risks ahead, but he had the great candour to admit that Self-government was better than any other form of Government. Want of tribal solidarity might lead to strife, but he was there to do his best and to help the struggling Africans in their way to full self-government. The Governor spoke in very high terms about Sri Apa B. Pant, formerly Indian Commissioner in Nairobi, who had visited Nigeria, and also about Raja Sri Rameswara Rao. He was exceedingly polite, and came down all the way from his office in the first floor to see me off in my car. He was certainly a very fine type of Englishman, and he had a kind word to say to Sri Rupchand whom he knew and who was waiting downstairs talking with the Governor's Secretary. This meticulous politeness did not appear to have anything merely political about it.

The Yoruba artist, Mr. Orishadikpe, owner of the Nigerian Art Centre, who had requested me to come and see him in his shop, had a photograph taken of himself in native dress with me. He made me sign his Visitors' Book and presented me with a fine piece of work in thorn-wood by himself—the figure of an old man leaning on a long stick, with considerable character in his face. I liked his work and I gave him a little letter of appreciation later, which I am sure he liked.

There are Moral Re-Armament Workers in Lagos, and I was invited by an American Member of the M.R.A Team, which was at Lagos at the time, to meet them. They were about 7 or 8 people. Sri Rupchand and myself had tea with these nice people. The M.R.A. Movement seems to be doing real good to Africa, to South Africa particularly, in trying to bring about a change of heart among the whites with regard to the Africans in that unfortunate part of the world.

Sri Rupchand had asked some Nigerian friends to dinner to meet me this night. The guests were Dr. A. Maja, who had visited India before, an ex-Minister of the Central Government of Nigeria named Mr. S. O. Gbadamosi, and several other prominent gentlemen. We had a very long discussion amongst ourselves about various matters, and it was quite interesting to meet so many prominent intelligent as well as well-informed Africans at Lagos. Mr. Gbadamosi volunteered the information that he was a Muslim, and a very liberal Muslim too ; he gave me a little side-light about his liberal attitude to things. He is the eldest brother, and consequently the head of the family. One of his younger brothers is a Christian, and this Christian brother with his wife lives with him in the same house. The Christian brother and his wife have been permitted to use the family refrigerator to keep their ham and bacon, which are of couse forbidden to Muslims.

But for this liberal concession, the Christian younger brother must agree to have all his children 'baptised' ( the expression was Mr. Gbadamosi's ) into the Muslim faith of his elder brother.

9 August, 1954 : Ibadan—Kano

After breakfast I took leave of my friends Sri Rupchand and others at 4, Hagley Road, and Sri Rupchand took me to the air-port. Sri Rupchand already had sent messages to Messrs. Chellaram's branch establishment at Kano. Our plane from Lagos left for Kano at 9-30 in the morning. It was a very small plane, and the passengers were some Europeans and Syrians ( Christian merchants from Lebanon ), and Africans—men and women with lots of luggage. We touched Benin, Enugu and Jos before we arrived at Kano. The air-ports at all these stations were very small places, and there was no proper catering anywhere, excepting at Enugu, where we made a lunch of sausage-rolls and chocolate bars and biscuits as well as coffee. The country throughout the greater part was all very green after the rains, but up in the North, after crossing the Niger when we arrived at Jos in the Bauchi Plateau, the land was green with grass, but other vegetation was sparse ; and in summer it must be very arid. Jos is a town within the tin-mine area, and some Europeans got down there. We arrived at Kano at 4-00 in the afternoon. Sri Parasram Mansukhani and other members of the firm of Messrs K. Chellaram came to receive me at the station, and there was the Secretary of the British Resident at Kano, Mr. H.A.S. Johnston. I was to stay with Mr. Johnston at Kano. So I went with his Secretary, and my Sindhi friends followed me with my baggage to the Residency. Mr. Johnston and his wife received me, and they were exceedingly nice people and were very kind hosts. I was told about the ceremonies

which were to take place the next day, which was the day of the Bakr-'Id, the great Muslim festival. The Emir of Kano, according to custom, was to ride in state followed by a cavalcade of body-guards and officers, some of whom were to be in mediaeval chain-armour of iron. He was to come to the great mosque in the city for prayers and sacrifice. He was also to meet the British Resident officially, and then he was to deliver on the Radio a sort of sermon to his subjects. The huge spaces near the great mosque, which was a handsome new building in the Muslim Egyptian style, would be filled with thousands of people from Kano and round about. There was to be a military band, and various amusements for the people after the sermon of the Emir was over. We were to be taken along with other guests of the Resident and with high British Officials, tomorrow after breakfast at 9-30, to a place set apart for us to see the whole show. After the ceremony was over, I was to go to meet my Indian friends, with whom I was to have lunch.

The Residency at Kano is a fine house with beautiful grounds all round boasting of some fine trees, and the arrangements for a guest like myself were the best that one could think of. Kano gave me a very pleasant surprise in the matter of the weather. It was in the midst of the rains, and I could see in the evening astonishingly dark rain-clouds, as in India during monsoon time, and throughout the night there was continuous and heavy downpour with thunder-storm, which I enjoyed to the fullest, sitting in the first-floor verandah for a couple of hours, and listening to the patter of the rain on the trees in the garden.

Mr. Johnston had asked to dinner a very remarkable Englishman, Dr. Bargery, who was in the Hausa country from 1902 to 1931, and after having retired in that year he had come back to Kano after 23 years to revise the

Hausa Bible. Mrs. Johnston was a very kind hostess, and Dr. Bargery was a fine man, a good scholar who was full of reminiscences of olden days 40 to 50 years ago in Nigeria. I could get an inkling of many of the happenings in those pioneering days for the British in this part of Africa, and there were many episodes of British grit and courage and tact which came out in the course of the conversation between Mr. Johnston and Dr. Bargery. Knowing that I was interested in languages, Dr. Bargery also spoke about certain peculiarities of the Hausa language, and I noticed that in some matters there was an agreement between this strange language so far away in the heart of Africa and some of our Indian languages. Next day by appointment I went to Dr. Bargery's place and got some notes from him in this connexion.

10 August 1954: 'Id Festival at Kano

Last night's rains had done considerable harm to the arrangements for this morning's festivities and ceremonies. Kano is a city with a wonderful architecture—its buildings are generally made of hardened clay with a reddish colour, and in the facades of a good many houses there are very remarkable geometrical designs and patterns, which are generally in relief on the smooth clay of the wall. The rains, if they had persisted longer, would have done considerable damage to the buildings also. We left at about 8-15 in a station wagon accompanied by one of the A.D.C.s of the Resident—there were 7 persons (all Europeans) in our party, 3 gentlemen and 3 ladies, besides myself, and one of the gentlemen whose acquaintance I made was the West German Consul at Lagos, a gentleman who was in America for a long number of years and was a very cultured person. On our way we had to pass through huge crowds, and there were lots of horsemen, Hausa warriors with loose robes and black turbans, one end of the turban



covering the lower part of the face as in the case of the Tuareges of Central Sahara. These horsemen were getting ready to come and join the procession. We were to pass through the streets of old Kano to come to the plain of the Great Mosque where the dominating thing was the huge blue dome of the mosque. On our way, a little incident occurred which showed the new spirit which was actuating the Africans now. At a turning, with huge crowds pressing round us, a very smart African police officer took exception to our chauffeur breaking some traffic rule, and he behaved in a most imperious manner taking his stand on the law, and ignoring the exalted white personnel including the A. D. C. to the Resident who were in the car. Everybody kept quiet, the chauffeur was apologetic, and the police-man was loudly and rather disdainfully critical, in English, and then he condescended to allow us to pass. We then came near to the Square, where we had to leave our car and to go a considerable way on foot because of the traffic jam. At one end of the square where the gala ceremony would take place, there was a pavilion made where guests and officers were seated, and by its side, on the topmost flat roof of an old mud house which was a sort of a palace, there was an awning under which seats were arranged for the Resident and his honoured guests. I was dressed in our Indian costume (white *sherwani* and *chooridar* trousers), and I was taken there. The whole area below was a mass of seething humanity. The prevailing colours in the dresses were blue and white, and the entire population was black in complexion. But the dresses of the horsemen and of the many officials were quite colourful. After prayers and sacrifice the Emir came out and marched at the head of his horsemen, but before him came some messengers and some officers including the Emir's Jester and the old palace eunuchs. There were half a dozen horsemen clad in medieval chain-armour and

steel helmets, like similar horsemen in Jaipur State in India. The military band was playing—the soldiers were Hausas and also men from the southern areas, who were a fine body of men and looked quite smart and business-like. The Emir came at the head of his cavalcade, got down from his horse in his flowing robes, met the Resident formally and shook hands with him, and then he mounted again and went to the place from where he was to give his discourse. The Resident then came up to the mud palace where we were seated under the awning, where his chair also was placed. There were four seats, one for the Resident, one for the Chief Justice who did not come, one for the Resident's A. D. C., and one for myself as a guest from India. After the Emir's speech on the Radio was over, the ceremony came to an end, but the crowd which had collected continued to be there and to be amused by the movements of a man on stilts and by various little groups of musicians and singers and dancers.

We left the place and had some difficulty in making our way through the crowd. We had a rather late breakfast with our hosts, and then Messrs. Parasram Mansukhani and other Sindhi friends came to the Resident's house and took me to the air-port at Kano, to meet some Sindhi people who were coming to West Africa in a chartered plane. The Sindhis generally arranged it in this way that when they had to transfer their personnel, the various establishments took concerted action and they hired a plane from India to bring the new personnel, and take back those who were going home or to other stations by the same returning plane.

Our lunch at Sri Parasram's place was a very long affair, as in the case of Sindhi dinners and lunches. But I was enabled to meet most of the Sindhi friends there and also some Gujarati Muslim merchants from Cambay whose business was in a very old line—one of the oldest—in

India. They were dealers in beads made from various types of semi-precious stone like agate and carnelian, in different colours, red, yellow, green, blue, black and white, and sometimes in black and white stripes. The people of Africa have always liked these beads which came from India. These beads are made of these very hard coloured stones and are found all over Eastern, Central and Western Africa, and are kept as heir-looms in old families. They are called "Aggrey beads" in West Africa. They are sometimes small, and sometimes quite big, and are in various shapes, round, lozenge, and drum-like; and India is known to have exported these from pre-historic times. The Gujarati merchants carried on that trade, and there is a very great demand for them still. They make them in Cambay. There were two Gujarati young men, both Muslims, whom I found to be very intelligent; and they also liked my little talk to our Sindhi friends, after lunch; the subject which I wanted to impress upon them was the "Hospitality of Indian Mind," in accommodating the Indian spirit to all great ideas and actions which were to be found in this world.

In the afternoon my Sindhi and Gujarati friends took us to the Emir's palace. It was a huge rambling building with several court-yards, and the material from which this remarkable structure was made was hardened clay. We found the outskirts of the palace as well as its court-yards full of people in holiday attire and holiday mood, and there were numerous groups of people, 10 or 20 or 40, who were playing on drums and singing, sometimes standing and sometimes seated on the ground. Batches of these musicians and singers were going into the Emir's palace and coming out of it. They were the subjects of the Emir who had come to make the usual 'Id greetings to him. When we went to the palace, we found that the Emir was holding an audience with his subordinate chiefs, and on a

message being sent that some Indian gentlemen wanted to meet him, we were asked to wait for a little while ; and after 20 minutes, sittng on chairs which were brought specially for us (the Emir himself in his audience with his subordinate chiefs was seated on the floor, on a carpet with a cushion spread on the top of it, and his chiefs were also squatting on the ground on the carpet), we were taken to another room which was furnished in a semi-European way. This was a sort of a Durbar Hall of the Emir, and here we found him seated on a dais, but squatting on a kind of a cushion, or, as we call it in India, a *guddi*. The visiting chiefs were seated round about him on the floor, and to his left, a little below, was seated his Interpreter. There was a Herald in the old Hausa court-dress, who was occasionally shouting something in Hausa at the top of his voice, which as I came to understand was a set or formal kind of panegyric of the Emir. The Interpreter of the Emir was his nephew, who spoke fluent English. The Emir himself, I was told, knew English very well. But as a matter of court etiquette, he did not speak any other language excepting his own, viz. Hausa. I had read, and I was also told by some British friends at Kano, that Hausa as used in the court of the Emir was a stately language with a number of expressions which were considered very elegant and polite. It was indeed quite a pleasing language to hear. We were presented one by one before to the Emir, and we shook hands with him, and we also, according to the Hausa custom, showed our uplifted clenched fists and said 'Id Mubarak (may the 'Id festival be full of blessings for you) to the gentry present. I had about a quarter of an hour's audience with him through the interpreter. I interspersed my conversation with such Arabic words and phrases as I could muster, and I suggested his visiting India when he would find our Indian Muslim citizens celebrating the Bakr-'Id in our Indian way. He was very intelligent, and a

pleasant-looking young man whose features one could see now because the veil below his nose was let down. He hoped, God willing, to come to India sometime, and altogether he was a very pleasant and cultured man to meet.

We took leave of the Emir at about 5-20, and then our Sindhi friends brought me to the residence of the Principal of the Arabic School at Kano. He was a tall Sudanese scholar from Khartoum whose name was Awad Muhammad Ahad. In his house we sat on European chairs, and were offered cold drinks. There were other Muslim notabilities, including two merchants from Tripoli. The Principal himself was a very dignified man and seemed to be a very fine scholar, and he appreciated very much my few Arabic sentences and tags—he understood and spoke English, and we talked on certain universal aspects of Islam. In these parts they follow a practical and matter-of-fact Islam as in the Quran, and *Tasawwuf* or Sufism, the mystic side of Islam, does not appear to be so much in vogue here as in India, Iran and Central Asia. The local Islam is still largely within the orbit of the pre-Islamic African ways and mentality and culture.

According to last evening's arrangement, I then went to Dr. Bargery's quarters where he was working on the new version of the Hausa Bible. I took from him some words and passages in Hausa which indicated some characteristics of the language which occurred also in our modern Indian languages. Dr. Bargery was a scholar and a perfect gentleman, and it was quite an honour and a pleasure to meet him.

I searched in some of the local shops for typical Bida brass-work which was the most beautiful in Northern Nigeria. Kano, i. e. Hausa leather-work was very beautiful, and their brass and copper work had a distinctive character, though it was not so elegant. I was not successful in

getting any fine Bida work like some specimens I had seen in Mr. Johnston's house.

At my host's there was a gathering of some gentlemen who joined us for dinner. It was a very enjoyable evening, talking particularly to Captain Maiden. He was originally in Indian Military Service during the First World War, and he was with the 11th Rajputs. He appeared to be a very sympathetic observer of Indian affairs. At the present moment he was in the cotton business, and was just back from East Africa and Sudan, studying the conditions of cotton-growing there. There was Mr. Denzer, the German Consul at Lagos, whom I had met in the morning, and Mr. Watt, the District Officer, with his wife. After the guests had left, I had some conversation with the Johnstons, and I found them taking an intelligent and sympathetic interest in the present-day affairs in Asia and Africa.

11 August, 1954 : Kano—Accra

I was to catch my plane for Accra very early, and Mr. Johnston arranged with the air-port people to give him a ring up at 3-30 A. M. to inform him whether the plane was coming in time. As it was a Muhammadan holiday, Mr. Johnston had given leave to his chauffeur, who was a Muslim ; and he showed such exceptional consideration for his guest that he himself got up very early, by half past four, and drove me in his car to the air-port so that I might catch the plane which was to leave at about 6 o'clock. Mr. Johnston also waited until the plane was in, and by this time our Sindhi friends also came up. Mr. Johnston by chance found at the air-port a friend of his with his wife, who got down at Kano. His charming courtesy I shall always remember. He was, as he told me, acquainted with Sri Apa B. Pant of our External Affairs

Ministry—both of them having been at Christ Church College in Oxford.

At the air-station, I found among the passengers who had come from England and who were going to Accra a European woman with a black baby—evidently the baby's father was an African, and I was also pleased to find some other European women talking to the mother and even admiring the baby who was of course black but quite a nice and chubby child. Fazalbhair and another Gujarati Muslim young friend took group-photos of all of us before I went to board my plane.

We ultimately left at 7 o'clock, and we arrived at Accra in time. We found the Raja Sahib and the Rani Sahiba with their daughter and Sri Nayar of the Commissioner's office at the air-port. Sri Manickam, Government of India Architect from New Delhi, who was on a visit to Accra, was returning to India by way of Rome and Ankara, and he had come to take his plane, and I met him there once again.

I found in the Commissioner's office some presents from our Indian friends in Kumasi. There was a sample-piece of the very costly West African Kente cloth (woven in various coloured silks in a narrow hand-worked African loom), and a piece of Ashanti wood-carving—it was a small replica of an Ashanti royal stool—together with a copy of Dr. Danquah's book on "the Akan Doctrine of God", which I could not find in Accra. These were indeed touching expressions of the kindness and courtesy of my Indian friends in Kumasi headed by my hosts Sri Nankani and Sri Daswani.

At the Commissioner's bungalow, when we had lunch, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Strong of London who were Moral Re-Armament workers joined us. Mr. Strong was press-photographer and artist, and later on I had the pleasure of meeting him once again at Cambridge in England.

Mr. Arthur Strong had urged upon me to meet the Gold Coast artist, Kofi Antubam of Achimota College, before I left Accra. In the afternoon, the Raja Sahib took me to Achimota, and we found Mr. Antubam in his home, and I was very happy to make the acquaintance of this gifted person in Gold Coast. Mr. Antubam was at that time Head of the School of Art which was started in connexion with the Gold Coast University College. He was also an anthropologist, and he devoted himself to the depicting of Ashanti life and customs by means of his paintings. Besides, he was a good portraitist. He had also exhibited his works abroad. He was a person whose innate goodness and kindness came out immediately, and it appeared that he was a very close friend of the Raja Sahib also. He gave me a selection of photographs of portraits painted by him, and he wrote with his own hand at the back of each photo the name of the person whose portrait it was. He took us to the University Book-shop where I purchased some books, and then he took me to the little Art Gallery he had built up in the University premises, with pictures mostly by his own students; and he gave me a number of pen-and-ink sketches by himself of Ashanti life. He told us a lot about his Art School, and to help me to understand his background he presented me with catalogues of his exhibitions and with a short life-sketch of himself. I was very glad in this way to make the acquaintance of two of the most outstanding artists of West Africa at the present day—Ben Enwonwu, the sculptor of Nigeria, and Kofi Antubam, the painter of Gold Coast. The Raja Sahib had rather liked an oil-painting by Antubam depicting an Ashanti religious ceremony—a priest offering a libation of water to Onyankopon, the Supreme Divinity. This he purchased for 15 guineas.

The same evening after early dinner with the Raos, I was taken to the air-port by Sri Narendra Singh to catch



my P. A. A. plane to Robertsfield for Monrovia in Liberia. The plane was rather late, and after  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hour's comfortable run we landed at Robertsfield a little after midnight (Liberian time).

12 and 13 August, 1954 : Accra—Robertsfield—Monrovia

Immediately after the zero hour on the 12th, I had thus found myself on the soil of the free African Republic in West-Africa—Liberia. I found a Liberian gentleman, who was the head-clerk of one of the State departments, and he said he had come to receive me and to take me to Monrovia in a government car. There was not much of Customs and other formalities. We left at about a quarter to one, and did the 55 miles from Robertsfield to Monrovia by about 2-30 A. M., when we arrived at Monrovia. There was heavy rain on the previous night and the road was full of slush. When we came to Monrovia, it was of course pitch dark. But apart from the street lights, the President's house was illuminated by rows of lights, and dancing was going on there, as there was some festivity inside—as I came to know later on, it was in honour of the return from America of the President's wife. I was taken to the State Guest House, Ducor Hall, where I was given two big rooms with bath etc. overlooking the street. I had some sleep for the rest of the morning.

I was ready next day by 7-30, and I found that the only other guest in the house was a young Italian who said he was an employee of the Italian Embassy at Monrovia. There was a generous breakfast. The servants were all Liberians, some of them were descendants of the African slaves who founded the State of Liberia, and one or two of them were pure Liberians belonging to the Bassam and other tribes. They were very expert boys. The English they spoke was a local dialect which had developed out of

American Negro English, and it was rather difficult for me to follow their pronunciation at times. Thus, for example, they never said 'egg' but 'ey'. By 9.30, Professor Binayendra Nath Banerjea arrived at Ducor Hall. Prof. Banerjea is the son of the late Sri Nripendra Nath Banerjea, who was a distinguished Professor of English at Presidency College, Calcutta, in the Bengal Government Service. But he joined the Nationalist Movement, and for this he was punished by the British Government—he forfeited his pension to which he was entitled for many years of distinguished service. Professor Binay Banerjea was lecturer in Economics in the University of Calcutta and in one of the biggest colleges in Calcutta, and then he was for a number of years Secretary to the West Bengal Public Service Commission. After this he was taken over by the International Labour Organization of Geneva, and was sent to Liberia; and finally he joined the United Nations Organization, and is now the U. N. O. Adviser in Public Administration to the Government of Liberia. He was living in Liberia with his wife and daughters, and the two Misses Banerjea with their mother were very popular figures in Monrovia society. Mrs. Banerjea with her daughters and son was at that time in India, and Professor Banerjea, whom I met in Calcutta before leaving for West Africa, knew that I was coming, and he had published notes in the local papers about my arrival. In the meanwhile, a request was made from the Indian High Commissioner's office in London to the Liberian Embassy there that facilities might be given to me as a Professor from India for my visit to the West African Republic. A similar intimation was sent by Raja Sri Rameswara Rao from Accra. The Liberian authorities in their great courtesy had arranged a little programme for me for three days, which was in print when I arrived, and this programme included interviews with the President, a dinner with the President, a visit to the University College

with talks to the students, meeting some of the notabilities of Monrovia, a public lecture in the city of Monrovia, a reception by the Speaker of the Liberian Parliament, and a visit to a village called Klay about 25 miles in the interior of the country, to see tribal dances of the local village people, and to inspect the work of the UNESCO centre nearby for fundamental education. A Press Conference was also in the programme, but that had to be abandoned for want of time.

Monrovia is a small town of about 30,000 people only. The population of Liberia would come up to about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 millions, and less than 10% consists of English-speaking descendents of the Negro slaves who were sent back from America to start on their own with a free Negro Republic, under the protection of the United States. The national motto of the Republic of Liberia is—"the Love of Liberty brought us here". These Liberians who used to be known until recently as "Americo-Liberians", are all English-speaking, and they belong to one or other of several Christian denominations. The original people who belonged to the various tribes in the interior of Liberia were at first, because of their backwardness, inimically disposed to the Americo-Liberians, whose authority was for a long time virtually confined to Monrovia city and its environments. Now, of course, the authority of the Liberian Government is becoming more thoroughly established. The people who consist of tribals were until recently almost all pagans, but now they are under a cross-fire, with Christianity from Monrovia making a very slow and half-hearted progress along the coast, and with Islam from the North which has penetrated very deeply all over Liberia. In future there is likely to be a very great conflict of the two religions, and already the Muslims are asserting themselves. The President Mr. Tubman is a very strong and capable ruler who is universally respected, and he is very

anxious to weld all the tribes of Liberia into one single nation ; and for that he is doing his best by bringing the chiefs of the interior into closer relationship with the Christian population of Monrovia. He is anxious to open English schools all over the country, which is a thing very urgently needed, considering that English alone can give to the Liberians their necessary modern outlook. In his programme for modernization, he has to meet the opposition of the orthodox Muslim clergy, who want more and more Arabic and Quran schools in place of English schools and colleges. He has opened Government guest-houses for the chiefs and their people to come and see things with their own eyes in the capital city. Great programmes of welfare and modernization work have been taken up.

Economically, Liberia is entirely under American control. Thus, throughout half the distance of 55 miles from Robertsfield air-port to the city of Monrovia, the country is occupied by a large rubber plantation run by the American Firestone Tyre Co. The iron mines at Bomi produce some of the finest iron ore in the world, and these are under American control. The Americans are however helping the Nigerians in many ways.

Monrovia is quite a small town, and the sights of Monrovia are very few and they could be done in half a day. The views of the lagoon by which the city stands are quite picturesque. There are three or four Indian (Sindhi) shops which are doing good business in curios, as is usual. One interesting feature is the number of shops selling ivory-work made in the French territory in the interior. These ivories are carved on chunks of elephants' tusks, and they frequently give figures of West African tribal types, men and women, and sometimes designs of African life carved on the round tusks. The artistic work consists mostly of heads and busts of African women, and West

African village scenes, and some of it was, quite pleasing, though modern and even European in inspiration ; but the prices appeared prohibitive, as Liberia is within the American orbit and Liberian dollars and American dollars are at par.

On the morning of the 12th I was taken to see Mr. Momoly Dukuly, Under-Secretary to the Government of Liberia. He was a tall man, and very intelligent and clever, and contrary to my expectation I found that he was a pure Liberian and did not belong to the Americo-Liberian group. He took us to the President's house where we waited for about a quarter of an hour, and then, as fixed in the programme, I had an interview with the President for about 20 minutes. The President was a hearty sort of a man, and he listened to what I had to say about my reactions to West Africa in general and to Liberia, even for the few hours I was there ; and he expressed a great admiration for India and for our Prime Minister, and he repeatedly told me that he would like to have closer relations between India and his own country. Professor Banerjea seemed to be very intimately known to the President, and from the way in which the President talked to him one could see that he was esteemed very highly by the former.

I was keen on getting some of the publications of the Liberian Government about local peoples, and Prof. Banerjea arranged with officers in the Liberian Publicity Department to send a selection of books to me in India. After lunch at Ducor Hall, when according to my request I was given certain African dishes (which included the famous Palm Oil Chop or stew, and ripe bananas fried in palm-oil), I took some rest, and did some correspondence and literary work.

In the afternoon I met an American Missionary, Dr. Wickstrom of the Methodist Mission, who was interested

in African music, and I had a long chat with him about conditions in Liberia, and African culture, and about the want of union among the various Christian sects, and the prospects for Islam in Liberia.

In the evening there was to be a dinner with the President. It was to be a very formal affair at the Mansion House, the President's residence. I came in our Indian official dress—black trousers with white silk buttoned-up coat, and other Indian gentlemen came in black *sherwani* and *chooridar* trousers. There were 37 covers laid at this dinner, and all the Indian professors in Monrovia—there were four of them teaching science in the University College—were also invited. I was accompanied as usual by Prof. Banerjea, and we arrived at the Mansion House exactly at 7-30. I was introduced to the guests as they came in, and then I was taken upstairs to the President's own drawing-room to have an informal conversation with him. He reiterated the need for closer co-operation between India and Liberia. From the President's room I could have a very fine view of the adjacent garden with a beautiful statue of a dancing girl in bronze executed by a Liberian sculptor, Aaron Brown, who was no longer living. Then the President brought me down-stairs, and we waited in the Hall where the guests were formally introduced by the Usher who announced the name and office of each guest as he came, and he shook hands with the President and then with myself as the Chief Guest. The only European present was the British Ambassador to Liberia, a very tall Englishman who was also in the Indian Army. The entire proceedings were very formal. After that, we went to dinner, and music was played all the while we were at table. It was an eight-course dinner, and it was printed in the menu that the dinner was in honour of Dr. S. K. Chatterji. This was just a gesture of Liberia's friendship for India, and of her earnest desire to cultivate Indian friendship. It

would certainly be a good thing if India reciprocated the genuine friendly sentiments shown by Liberia. I was told later on by Prof. Banerjea that the President and others regretted that they did not have the music for the Indian National Anthem, otherwise it could be played by the State Band at the dinner. After dinner, the President gave the toast to the Chief Guest, and in the course of his speech he spoke in very warm terms about India and about the role India was playing in the world at the present day in promoting peace. I had to reply, and I felt that I was in very good form, and in my speech which started with a note of humour I emphasised upon the pacific ideals of India as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of *Ahimsa* or Non-injury, and about India standing as the great opponent to imperialistic exploitation and racialism of any sort. My speech appeared to have been very much appreciated, as it was applauded from time to time. When we adjourned for coffee after dinner was over, I had the occasion to come into close conversation with the President once again, and with many of the African Ministers and others individually. The whole function went on till about 11 o'clock.

Liberia has one Institution for higher training which is known as the Liberian University College. It is a big residential college, and they have just started the running of a centre of higher culture and research. They are taking professors from abroad, and there are some German and American as well as four Indian Professors, and all these Indian professors are from Mysore State.

In the morning I made a round of the city of Monrovia and some of its environments with Prof. Banerjea as my guide. I paid a courtesy call to the residence of the British Ambassador whom I had met the previous night at dinner. He was a very tall and athletic man, and when in the Indian Army he belonged to the artillery of the

North-Western Frontier Force. He was very pleased with my visit and with the trend of our conversation. I then came to the state offices and met some of the officers, in order to arrange for books to be sent from Liberia to India.

My visit to the University was fixed for 10 A.M., and I was taken by Prof. Banerjea, and met Dr. Bond, Principal of the Liberia University College. He was a coloured gentleman from America. I was shown round the buildings and the grounds. There were not many students in evidence, although in one of the lawns I found a number of them talking and laughing among themselves. I had to give several talks in the course of my round, with some 15 minutes' talk to 3 girls, who were senior students doing English literature and other humanistic subjects. They were exceedingly shy, and they listened to my talk about English and other studies in India and what should be our aim in such studies. The Lady Dean of the Faculty of Arts also joined us. I was taken to see some of the classes. Mrs. Henries, wife of the Speaker of the Parliament, was holding a class on African History—she is a Professor in the University, and I had to address this class for about 8 minutes, and I dealt upon the new knowledge that we were acquiring about the past history and culture of Africa and the necessity of having a regular and systematized research into African History and Civilization. I found some of the Indian Professors also taking their classes, in Mathematics and Science.

In the meanwhile, the students had gathered at the University Chapel. There were hymns and psalm-reading and prayer and blessings before and after my talk. It was a very orthodox and a determined Christian atmosphere, and I was wondering to what extent that had any reality for the larger masses of the people of Liberia who were more and more coming under the spell of Islam. The



whole atmosphere was that of American Christianity. I was introduced by Dr. Bond, by the Lady Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and by Prof. B. N. Banerjea. I spoke for about 20 minutes, and I dwelt upon the meaning of Culture and in what way we men and women of the University could enlarge our mental horizon and that of our people through education and culture.

After that we were given lunch by Dr. Bond in his residence. I was interested in Dr. Bond's collection of African art, and they included three remarkable bronzes from Benin and a number of modern Mandingo ivories and wood-work. There was a number of guests who joined us. There was Dr. Manjunath, there was Mr. Oscar Norman, Assistant Secretary of the Nigerian Government, there was Prof. Nathaniel V. Massaquoi, Assistant Secretary, Public Instruction, there was the American Ambassador for Liberia who was a Negro gentleman, and there was Dr. Joseph N. Togbo. Dr. Togbo had been recently elected President of the W. H. O. Assembly. Most of these gentlemen were members of the different African tribes like the Kpelle, the Vai, the Kru, etc. There were all very highly educated gentlemen, and it was a delight to talk with them about various matters. The lunch was a very pleasant function, and we met Mrs. Bond after lunch. After returning to Monrovia city, I had a long and interesting chat with Dr. Massaquoi on the racial and cultural problems of West Africa in general and of Liberia in particular.

I could see some of the statues with which the city of Monrovia was embellished by the late Aaron Brown who was evidently Liberia's only great artist. In the afternoon from 5 to 7 there was a cocktail-party, with myself as the chief guest, given by Mr. Henries, Speaker of the Parliament. It was quite a big affair, and a large number of persons were invited. The guests filed past shaking

hands with the Speaker and myself, and there were probably more than 100 of them. I met and talked to many of them individually, and they represented not only the *elite* of local society but also included a number of foreigners, the French and British and German Ambassadors, and businessmen including the four Sindhi merchants from India. I could hear that there was general satisfaction at my speech of last night at the President's dinner.

In the evening I was taken to the local Y.M.C.A. where a small audience had gathered to listen to my talk, which lasted for nearly 45 minutes. It was mostly on cultural approximation and on miscegenation of different peoples and cultures, and also on the formation of an "Africanism". Mr. Dukuly presided over this meeting, and introduced me in very eulogistic terms. The audience was mostly African, both Liberian as well as American Negro, and there were some Europeans. After the lecture, one or two questions were asked, and it was over by 9 o'clock.

14 August, 1954 : Monrovia—Klay : Robertsfield—  
Conakry—Dakar

According to the arrangement made by the Government of Liberia, I was to go to a village named Klay to see the work of the UNESCO Fundamental Education Centre nearby, and also to witness native African dances which were arranged by Government for me. Early in the morning before breakfast Mr. Oscar Norman, Officer-in-charge of the Interior, came with Professor Binayendra Nath Banerjea and with Mr. Broadfield, an American Negro Officer of the U. N. O. who was staying at Monrovia. We started by 6-15 on our way to Klay, and we stopped at two or three villages. This gave me a glimpse of African village life. We first stopped at a village where we met Mr. Bai T. Moore, who was a UNESCO officer, being

the Joint-Director of the Fundamental Educational Centre. Mr. Moore was a member of the Dei tribe, and his father and other relations were living in the village. He himself had spent some time in America, and I was told that he had married a Negro lady there and had a family. But as his wife refused to come to live with him in Africa, he came back alone, and he then married again in his own community. I met the second Mrs. Moore. She was quite a lively young lady, and received Prof. Banerjea and other visitors very kindly. Mr. Moore was trying to encourage local African arts and crafts. He was to be sent to Bangalore in India for training in educational work under the UNESCO, and he was leaving for India in September (when later he was in India, he corresponded with me from Bangalore). Although he had an English name, his people were Muslims. The name of the village was Dimeh, about 9 miles from Monrovia. His father was one of the chiefs of the Dei tribe.

We went next to another village called Amina, where the local chief, also of the Dei tribe, was a Muslim. His name was Amodu (Ahmad) Zwana. He was hugely pleased when I repeated in front of him the *Suratu-l-Fatiha*, the opening chapter of the Quran, in Arabic, and he almost gave me a brotherly embrace. The people mostly were Muslims.

Next we came to the village of Mr. Oscar Norman. Here his whole family consisting of his brothers and their wives made us welcome, and we stopped for some time in his house. We were quite interested to find that although they belonged to the Dei tribe, the people had accepted the Vai system of writing. Some 140 years ago, a Vai chief got the idea of writing from the Europeans. He did not adopt the Roman script, but invented a phonetic syllabary of his own, in which there were separate and quite different letters for syllables like *pa pe pi* or

*ta to tu*. This is quite a cumbrous system, with over 100 different symbols. But as a native invention, the Africans of the area, including of course the Vai among whom this system originated, have taken very kindly to it. Although the Dei people spoke a different language from the Vai, nevertheless they had accepted this script. Probably the fact the Vai were now largely Muslim, like the Dei, accounted partly for the use of the Vai writing among the Dei and among the Golas and other tribes who were Muslim. On the mud wall of a house within Mr. Norman's compound, we found 8 to 10 lines of Vai writing in white chalk, and at the bottom I was startled to find the Arabic religious formula *Bi-smi-llahi-r-Rahmani-r-Rahim* ('in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate') written in a good Arabic hand. Mr. Norman, in spite of his European and Christian name, was on his native heath, and he felt every inch of him an African chief of the Kpelle or Gola tribe. They were preparing palm-nuts for extracting oil from them, and as we showed interest in this, there were good-humoured smiles everywhere and they hastened to explain to us the details of the process and presented us with some oil-nut kernels. The women of the family and the children and also grown-up people all came up. One of Mr. Norman's brothers showed me how they kept accounts in the Vai script—it was a list of their workmen and the amounts paid to them. The Golas and the Deis were related tribes, who now appeared to be merging into one people. The Vais were rather distant in language, but nevertheless they were exerting considerable influence on them. It seemed however that the intellectuals affected Anglo-American ways and more or less used English. And English was very much necessary for the different tribes to communicate with each other. But nevertheless, it appeared to me that Islam was making headway very fast even in Christian-

dominated Liberia, and the stream of silent missionary influence of Islam was coming from the North ; and it was clear that considerable sections of the people, even close to Monrovia, have already become Islamised. We found more evidence of it when we came to the next village, Klay, our destination this morning.

The Gola tribe numbered about 30,000. Mr. Norman's village which was named Basali was a very clean sort of a place, though with only thatched huts. Our objective was Klay village which was a considerable place with about 200 houses inhabited by Golas. There were 1000 people under a chief named Zwana Jalomala, who was a Muslim like the entire people of the village. This chief came to receive us in the house of the District Officer. The chief was a slight man with a limp, and he was dressed in the flowing blue and white garments of the Muslims. We got down from our car in front of the house of Mr. Charles Williams, the District Officer, who belonged to the Bassa tribe, but he was an English-speaking Christian educated at Freetown in Sierra Leone. He had arranged for the dances and for our refreshment and other entertainment under instructions from Monrovia. In front of the District Officer's residence, which was a very well constructed and comfortable thatched bungalow, there was a bit of level ground, a sort of a village common or square ; and the dance was to take place there.

We took a stroll through the village, and saw the rather old-fashioned African life that was there. The women were moving about mostly without any covering above the waist. There were a few petty shops where fruits and cola-nuts and cigarettes and other things were for sale. We were shown the village prayer-hall or mosque, which was just a big thatched hut, with a space walled off for the women. The village Mallam or Mullah was a Mandingo who was staying there for the spiritual guidance of the people. The

villagers have affiliated themselves to Islam within the present generation, and their Islam was not even skin-deep. They were still practising all their old dances and festivals and frequently their pagan practices with considerable amount of zeal and conviction, and this was quite tolerated. During the present generation there were no signs of break from the past, but in the second generation there is bound to be a certain amount of reaction, and finally there would be a sort of conflict of ideals. The Chief of the village was very anxious to please us ; and while arrangements were being made to call the people to the dance, we left for the UNESCO Fundamental Education Centre where we met a very friendly and helpful French Officer. This was a centre for training teachers meant to work in the villages, and young men had come from the interior who were being trained to act as teachers for making the people literate in their own languages and in English. There were some buildings where classes were held for the 60 students. These were quite comfortable huts, according to African standards, which were erected to accommodate them, and there were married students' quarters also as many of them were accompanied by their wives. They represented most of the various tribes round about Monrovia. The French Officer in charge of that station had a number of native African assistants, and he was a very sympathetic man for Africans. He was quite glad when I spoke to him in French. He made me inspect his office and showed me the type of text-books they were using, and made a gift of an Atlas of West Africa and some UNESCO literature to me.

We met there an Indian worker of the UNESCO, Sri Srinivasa Rao from Mysore. He was in charge of another village centre a few miles away, and he had come to meet us. From my conversation with him, I found that although he was for one year in that remote place in Africa, he was

quite happy with his work, and he was glad to be of some help to the Africans. He had the proper missionary spirit of an educator, and although he had in front of him still one more year to stay there, he was quite cheerful and seemed to like the work. This is certainly a very happy omen and it augurs very well for the success of our Indian workers in different parts of the world who would try to help struggling peoples in the path of modernization. I was very favourably impressed by the personality and idealism of Sri Srinivasa Rao, who seemed among other things to have a most intelligent and enlightened outlook, beside courage and devotion, and what were very necessary also, imagination and fellow-feeling.

We then returned to the house of the District Officer Mr. Williams, and although we were much pressed for time because I was to return to Monrovia and from there to go to Robertsfield, a distance of nearly 80 miles from Klay, to catch my afternoon plane for France, we were forced to have a very heavy breakfast with Mr. Williams. He had a fine sense of hospitality, and we could not resist the good things which he placed before us. There were goat-meat curry in the Indian style, and chicken curry in the African way made with palm-oil. There was also rice, and bread, and spam sandwich, and very fine coffee for which Liberia is becoming famous. In the meanwhile, when we were having this repast, the dancers were coming in in groups, and drums were beating to call the people.

After finishing our meal, we came out in the verandah and saw the parties. Of the two groups from the village, one consisted of 4 girls and 8 men. The girls and the men were in ordinary African cloth, but one man with a loose robe like the Egyptian *gelabieh*, which was ugly and ill-fitting for him, seemed to jar with the others. And there was another group consisting of half a dozen young women. Their dance was rather monotonous, and they

were singing in the Gola language. Then there came two lorry-loads of dancers from a neighbouring village, led by a chieftainess. She was a very comely and a rather forward woman of between 30 to 35, dressed elegantly in the typical African style with a low blouse and the typical African cloth worn like a skirt, and she had quite an amount of fine filigree gold jewellery on her arms, and there hang a pendant in gold from her neck-chain. She allowed us to inspect her ornaments, and on the pendant I found some Arabic writing engraved on the gold. This chieftainess shook hands with us, and then she marshalled her group of about 15 young women and some men. I noticed that they were all dressed in the same way—the African cloth for women arranged to look like a skirt, and this was of loud though not of jarring colours, and the blouse was made of red cloth with white spots on it. They all wore European lady's shoes. They were told that we did not have much time, and they commenced their dancing along with the other parties who were already performing. This young womens' dance was in a sort of a ring, the women following one another in a circle and singing. There was considerable amount of elegant foot-work. The chieftainess and the girls dancing in this troupe had an instrument which was peculiar to Africa. It consisted of a small hollow gourd with a long neck like a handle, filled with beans, and when holding the long neck as a handle they shook the gourds, the beans inside rattled; and this was all the musical accompaniment.

Then slowly with drums came up from the village another group of men and women headed by a man in a raffia garment, a garment made of rushes or a kind of grass which covered the whole body making the man look like a hay stack, and on the head he had a tall mask of wood with a face which was rather grotesque, made of black



wood. This masked personality was popularly known as "the village devil", and the dance was known as the Bowu Devil Dance, and I could not find anyone who could give me an intelligent account of it. The person who was dancing began to whirl about with considerable force and sometimes to roll on the ground when the tempo of the drum music increased. The American Negro gentleman Mr. Broadfield was looking at the whole thing with interest, and before the Bowu began to whirl and roll on the ground, he was very keen on seeing this frenzied dance, and he was a bit impatient, and he called out to us several times, "Why does not the fellow put himself in a frenzy and roll on the ground?" This of course the Bowu actually did, and our American friend was satisfied. There was then another Bowu who also started some dance when the first one stopped. Then there were some girls who had stood out from among the crowd and they began to dance one at a time. This dance involved a considerable amount of foot-work and hip-movement, and appeared to us to be rather on the suggestive side. I was told that these girls had just come out from the 'Sande house' which was an organization to train up girls into the mysteries of life just when they had entered the state of womanhood. This was a West African institution which was going strong in this part, by which adolescent girls would be sent into some hutments in the bush in charge of some matrons, and they would be made to live in isolation for some time, and they would be taken in hand and taught about the tribal dances and things that women, round whom the life of the tribe centred, should know. When they came out, they were like *debutantes* in European aristocratic society. A Sande girl formed a common subject for the West African sculptor in wood in these parts, and I was enabled to purchase through Mr. Bai Moore one such black-wood figure of a Sande girl. The dance of these girls was

certainly something very lively, and perhaps represented an important aspect of the African dance.

It appeared on the whole that all these dances were ordered to be displayed by Government officers, and although there was a certain amount of made-to-order business about it, nevertheless the dance is so much in the blood of the Africans that all the participants and spectators seemed to enjoy it to the fullest. Islam as well as Christianity (the latter in spite of the prudery of the Missionaries) had to make concessions to this African passion for the dance, and it may be hoped that this will continue to live even if the people entirely changed their religion. We had to leave all this very interesting show by about 9-30, and we ourselves felt disappointed at our own lack of time; and the villagers who had come also were not very happy when we went away, because it was feared that after the guests left the thing would gradually wear itself down, and the people who had come also to enjoy these dances whether as participants or as lookers-on, would find the thing tame.

On our way back, we met Mr. Bai Moore once again, and I purchased from him for a trifle the African sculpture of the *Sande* girl. He wanted to make a gift of it to me. We arrived at Monrovia by quarter past 10, and I gathered up my things and took leave of the servants there who had served me so efficiently. An officer of the Government was to accompany me to Robertsfield and to see that I did not have any difficulty on the way. I went to Prof. Banerjea's house—all the time he was with us. As one who kept himself well-informed about local affairs, the benefit of his knowledge I was getting from Prof. Banerjea all through. I took leave of him, and then started for Robertsfield.

It was drizzling a little bit when we were on our way to Klay. But fortunately when the dance was on it had stopped. On our way to Robertsfield we found that there

was more heavy rain in the preceding night, and the roads were in some places full of mud and slush. But we arrived at Robertsfield in good time. The Agent of the Air-France Line was a young Frenchman who was very helpful, particularly when I spoke to him in French.

I had to wait for some time in the air-port, and there I met some Gold Coast Africans and Liberians, some of whom were going abroad. They seemed to be a little tipsy, and one Gold Coast man, who said he was a journalist and was going to Europe in the same plane as myself, shook hands with me when he heard I was from India and declared that he was very pleased ; and so did all the Liberians when they found that I was an Indian and one who was connected with the University. These people with a knowledge of English have always a certain amount of respect for teachers and men in education. Our plane started at scheduled time, and I had a very comfortable journey. We stopped at Conakry and at Dakar. At Conakry we landed in the midst of torrential rains. At the air-port I could get a few coloured post-cards of West African life and types, but no ivories or other curios which I was told would be offered for sale by curio-dealers at the air-port. At Dakar the weather was fine, and we had at the air-port a most excellent French dinner. The attendants at Dakar were Peul or Fulani people, and I found their language, as they were talking among themselves, quite a pleasing one to hear. The Peuls are black, but have straight hair and regular features—they are the result of a mixture of Hamites with Negros. Generally, they seemed to be nice-looking. In the French plane we found several white wives of Africans with their children. It seemed that there was a considerable amount of intermixture of black and white in this way in French Western Africa, apart from white men having families with African wives.

15 August 1954 : Casablanca—Marseilles—Paris

Early morning, on the 15th, we touched at Casablanca in Morocco, on the Mediterranean coast. It was a beautiful, spacious place as I could see, and we had early-morning coffee there. We arrived at Marseilles at about 10 o'clock, and after 2½ hours we reached Paris.

My West African tour was terminated in this way. In Paris I met Mme. Jules Bloch, the widow of my old Professor, to whom I presented the printed volume of Essays on Linguistic Subjects prepared by Indian scholars in memory of Professor Bloch. From Paris I went to London, and in London I met Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Pandurang Vaman Kane and Dr. Ramachandra N. Dandekar, the other Members (with myself) of the Government of India Delegation to the 23rd International Congress of Orientalists which was going to be held at Cambridge from the 21st to the 28th of August.

After participating in the Congress I came back to London, and left London on the 31st August by the Air India International plane, and reached Bombay on the 1st and Calcutta on the 2nd of September 1954. This finished my 42-day trip away from home, including what I had been longing for, ever since 1919, a visit to West Africa. This was indeed a very short visit, but it was for me immensely educative and enjoyable, enabling me to see and understand a little, and appreciate much more than before, of our African brothers and sisters in their own homeland.

## APPENDIX

### A 'LITERACY DAY' IN A GHANA VILLAGE

The papers these days are giving in big headlines the news of the successful return to power of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the Premier of Gold Coast Colony, after the recent general elections held there last month (June 1956). Gold Coast Colony is one of the most important states in West Africa, now under the British. The people there, all pure Africans, have advanced remarkably both economically and educationally, and have developed (at least their leaders have) a very active political sense. The British also have followed a very liberal policy towards the Africans in West Africa generally; and this was largely circumstanced by the fact that the country is not suitable for settlement by Europeans. In 1954, when I visited Gold Coast, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his party had made their first triumphant debut in Gold Coast politics and Dr. Nkrumah had become the Premier of Gold Coast with his all-African Cabinet. On the 29th of July, 1954, the Gold Coast Parliament with its new members was formally opened by the British Governor of the Colony, H. E. Sir Charles Noble Arden-Clark. It was a picturesque ceremony to which I was invited as a visitor from India, thanks to the friendly offices of the representative of India in Gold Coast and West Africa, Raja Sri Rameswara Rao. All the 103 members of the newly elected Parliament were African, and they looked magnificent in their gorgeous African robes—loose gowns in blue and white and other colours for representatives of the Northern tribes, and Roman toga-like robes in resplendent colours, exposing the right shoulder and arm, of the Ashanti and other Akan peoples of the Centre and the South. In the course of this function, which was held

in full ceremony, with fanfare of trumpets and booming of guns, the Governor declared on behalf of Queen Elizabeth of England that full independence was to be granted to Gold Coast in 1956. The old nationalist government, which has come to power this year again, will reiterate their demand, and the promise given by the Queen, as it has been settled, will be fulfilled, by making Gold Coast an independent and a full member of the Commonwealth. Gold Coast therefore will be another and a new member of that International Political Association of which India still continues to be a member. The inclusion of Gold Coast as an independent unit is a remarkable event in world politics. It is recognizing the right of an African people to full status as a free nation, enjoying equal rights with any other people.

Gold Coast nationalists are thinking of having a national and an African name for their country in the place of the English expression Gold Coast, in French *Cote d' Or*. They have revived the name of Ghana, which was a native African empire which flourished much farther to the North, in the area between the Senegal and Niger rivers. The African empire was destroyed by the Muslim Moors ( Berbers and Tuaregs ) and Arabs in the thirteenth century, and the people of Ghana, after this catastrophe, came down to the South, into what is now Gold Coast ; and it is believed that the Akan people (coming up to near three millions and dominating culturally and intellectually the entire country) were descended from the men of Ghana. In fact, it has been suggested that the name *A-kan* is derived from the earlier *Ghana* or *Gana*. From the above history, Gold Coast nationalists have now decided to call their country 'Ghana'. We can hope that this new State of Ghana under its distinguished leader Nkrumah and his associates will be able to make its mark in the comity of nations.

The people of Ghana were very backward two generations ago. Education has spread, through the exertions of the Christian Missionaries primarily. A good many of the Akan people have become Christians, at least nominally; and in the northern territories of Gold Coast, Islam has spread very largely. But the bulk of the Akan people and many of the tribes of the North have still retained their old religion, and there is a spirit of pride in their ancient culture and religion, which is now becoming very much noticeable. The peoples of the North are a little backward, and they speak dialects allied to the Mossi language, which is quite different from the southern Akan group. The Akans are more advanced than the rest—in fact they are one of the most progressive peoples of Africa. In their education, the teaching of English has a very prominent place, and English is virtually the language of education and administration, as well as inter-state and inter-tribal trade and communication. But they are not neglecting their own languages. In this matter, they are receiving full support from both the Government and the Missionary educationists. These languages had no alphabet of their own, and a modified Roman script has been successfully employed to write and print them. A new approach to the grammar of these languages has started, and very scientifically conceived grammatical and other text-books have come out and are coming out in these. Now there is a tremendous enthusiasm among all sections of the people to become literate, first in their own languages and then in English. Fortunately, for their present intellectual and cultural advancement, there is quite an eager desire to study English, with no sign of giving up that language.

A programme of Primary Education is being implemented, and there are "Literacy Drives" everywhere. Villages have formed themselves into Unions with centres

for adult schools and schools for children, which have been started by the people with Government sympathy and support. Boys and girls and illiterate adults are taught their mother-tongue through the new Roman script, whether it is Twi or Fanti, Gan or Dagombe. To encourage students, social gatherings are called in different villages within the Union, when diplomas and certificates are given to both teachers and students for success in their work. On such occasions, collections are made to help these literacy drives within the area ; and they have also dancing as an attractive social function which draws people from far and near.

In the city of Kumasi which is the national centre of the Akan people, I spent a couple of days in August 1954. I was guest with the Indian merchants there. In the Gold Coast and in other States of West Africa, Sindhi merchants from India have made a place for themselves in their economic life, and are conducting flourishing business in the line of imports from Europe and elsewhere, and textiles from all countries, particularly hand-woven stuffs from India. Our Sindhi friends, who are all displaced Hindus from Sindh, have become quite popular with the local African peoples through their genuine sympathy for them and their correct business dealings. They also have endowed scholarships (particularly in Nigeria) for African students to come and study in India. This has been a very happy gesture on their part, and I was very pleased to find that the Indian merchants were held in great esteem and even affection. In Kumasi I stayed with Sri Tirathdas Chuharmall Nankani, and Sri Wassia Chelaram Daswani (popularly known as 'Baboo') helped me considerably during my stay in Kumasi.

At Accra, the capital of Gold Coast, I was told by members of the Education Ministry that an English officer in the Education Ministry, Mr. Owen Barton, had gone to



a village near Kumasi to participate in a 'Literacy Day' which the local people belonging to about a score of villages, were celebrating; and I might contact him there during my visit to Kumasi. In this way I could have some experience as to how the movement for mass-education was progressing. The Government office in Accra had also sent news of my coming to Kumasi to Mr. Barton, and Mr. Barton very kindly communicated with my Indian friends in Kumasi that the Literacy Day was being held at Juoben village, fourteen miles north-east from Kumasi, on Sunday, the 1st of August, from 2 p. m. onwards. My Indian hosts were requested to come there, taking me with them.

That day I was given a lunch at the residence of Sri Ishardas, one of the Kumasi merchants from India. Other Indian merchants were also invited, and this lunch was, as is always the case when our Sindhi friends give a lunch or dinner or even tea, quite a sumptuous affair. Incidentally, I may mention that for the first time I tasted at Sri Ishardas's place the national dish of West Africa, Palm-Oil Chop and *foufou*. The latter is just boiled and mashed yam—which is a tuber like our Bengal *man-kachu* (and North Indian *arai*, but much bigger), which, made into small rolls like thick white candles, formed the staple food of West Africa, until recently—now they eat rice, and maize, and wheat in addition. The Palm-Oil Chop is a kind of stew or curry made of bits of meat or fish combined with all kinds of available vegetables—peas, gourds, potatoes, brinjals, *okras* or *bhindis* (lady's fingers), and greens of various sorts—with a basis of a kind of bean or lentils made into a paste, and seasoned with chilis and other condiments, and the whole mixture is boiled in water with an addition of the finest kind of edible palm-oil; and the resultant dish has a beautiful golden-brown colour, and is delicious to the taste. The *foufou*

is dipped into this Palm-Oil Chop, as we eat bread or rice with our curry. I found this Palm-Oil Chop delicious indeed. Sri Ishardas's cook, as in many Indian houses in Gold Coast, was an Ashanti. The English scholar, statesman and colonial administrator Sir Harry Johnstone, who was in West Africa as Governor of Nigeria, has been quite enthusiastic in his praise of this African dish ; and I think, with Africa coming to have her rightful place in the comity of nations, West African Palm-Oil Chop (as well as North African *Couscous-and-Mutton*, which I had tasted in Paris) will become internationally accepted, like Italian *Minestrone*, Indian *Rice-and-Curry* and *Chutney*, Chinese *Chop-suey* and *Chow-mein*, Persian and Turkish *Pilaf*, Near Eastern and Central Asian *Shish-kebab*, Russian *Shchi* and *Borshch*, and Hungarian *Gulash*.

We were delayed owing to this lavish hospitality of Sri Ishardas, but we could at last start with our Sindhi friends from Kumasi to Juoben. We reached the village at 3.30 p. m. instead of 2 p. m. and consequently missed a good part of the ceremony.

Juoben was a smallish country town, with some official buildings, and the residence of the local Chief (or *Zemindar*, as we would call him in India), and this we later visited. We found a large gathering in an open square space within the village, and this place had buildings round about. It was what would be called in England the "village common". A large number of African people had gathered there, including women and children, and they were seated on the ground as in an Indian village gathering, but on two sides of the square some important persons were seated on chairs. There was a large empty space in the middle, which, I was told, would be used for community dancing by the village young men and women and boys and girls. At one end there was a place for distinguished people, with a low platform for speakers.

The local Chief who belonged to the village, whose name was Asafo-Adjaye and whose official title was *Krontihene*, was away in Accra (he was a Minister in the Cabinet), and in his place another Chief from a neighbouring village was presiding. He was seated in state under a huge umbrella. The umbrella is the insignia of a King or a Chief throughout West Africa, as it is in India and in countries adjacent to India. Near him was seated on a chair Mr. Barton, a nice-looking young Englishman in white shirt and khaki shorts, I was welcomed as a visiting Professor from far-away India, and was made to sit next to the Chief under his umbrella. There was a flutter among some people at the advent of this Indian party, consisting of my Sindhi hosts and myself, but we were received with welcome looks and smiles. Mr. Barton received me very cordially and told me that he was informed from Accra about my coming, and he was glad to meet an educationist and a professor from India. He said that the Government of Gold Coast had its difficulties and problems, and I added that so had India too. He offered to help me with information and facilities if I wanted to study the matter closely. Mr. Barton seemed to appreciate the enthusiasm which the people of Gold Coast felt for the spread of education. I shook hands with the Chief, who in his African robe looked quite classical—he was like a bronze statue of a Roman Senator. He had some gold ornaments on his person which heightened his fine black complexion, and showed off to advantage the colourful garments he wore. Round his head he had a fillet faced with little rectangular bits of gold as a sort of a crown, and he had bracelets on his arms, made of coloured cloth but with golden plates attached. He had also big gold rings on his fingers, and leather sandals tipped with gold on his feet. He understood but did not speak English. Behind him was his retinue, and one of them held the big umbrella

over him and myself. We had a table in front of us. Most of the local gentry were dressed either in African robes or in shorts and shirts, and a few had full European costume—they were mostly officers of the Government.

A good many of the men and children were bare-bodied. The women and young girls were mostly dressed in a quite attractive modern native dress which consisted of a cotton cloth with printed designs in strong colours, worn what would be called in India, *lungi*-fashion, i. e. in the style of the Burmese *lounghyi* or Indonesian *sarong*, the cloth draping the body from the waist to the ankles like a skirt. They had usually some kind of jacket above the 'cloth' they wore, and this 'cloth', as it was called in English, was quite a becoming garment covering the lower limbs from the waist to the feet. Formerly most women did not wear anything to cover the breasts, as they still do (or did until very recently) in some parts of India and Indonesia and other tropical countries. This is of course getting obsolete everywhere. African women cannot sport long hair on the head. They generally crop their kinky hair short. But as they wind a piece of coloured cloth round the head as a turban, this 'head-cloth' makes up for the want of "woman's crowning glory" on their heads. This turban cloth for women, or a biggish handkerchief, to tie round the head, is in vogue all over West Africa, and this is a distinctive characteristic of West African women's attire. Indians would be interested to know that for the woman's turban or 'head-cloth', which is generally two yards long and thirty-six inches wide, the most eagerly sought stuff comes from India. The Indian merchants import from Madras hand-woven cloth with characteristic designs in the African tradition woven in the stuff. I was told that one big Indian firm, that of Messrs. Chellaram (Nigeria) Ltd., of Lagos and other towns in Nigeria, imports every month over 1000 bales

of this Madras hand-woven cloth, each bale consisting of 120 pieces (of 8 yards by 36 inches each), to meet the Nigerian demand. West African women retailers cut these 8-yard pieces into four of 2 yards each, and sell them to the local women. There were a number of young girls dressed in European-style skirts also. I noted that in West Africa, women are either 'Cloth Women' or 'Skirt Women'. Those who follow the native African ways and dress themselves in the native African 'cloth' are 'Cloth Women'. As a rule, such 'Cloth Women' have not been to an English school. 'Skirt Women' have got some English education, and they dress in European or semi-European style. It is as if we had in India 'Sari Women' and 'Gown Women', but fortunately our women-folk, even among the highest elite classes, are without exception 'Sari Women'. As educated women, the 'Skirt Women' are more in demand as wives among certain educated classes of men. But owing to a national upsurge, the beauty of the native African women's dress is coming to be recognized; and I hope that in Africa, like our Indian ladies sticking to the Sari, African ladies also will revive amongst themselves the 'native cloth'.

When we had arrived, the distribution of prizes and certificates to the successful teachers and their pupils, both adult and children, was over. The report was also read. They were then having a drive for a collection. The people assembled were asked on behalf of the Association which had taken up the work of a literacy drive in the area to contribute whatever they could for the good cause. A very intelligent-looking African young man in a white shirt and khaki shorts and with bare feet was on the low platform for speakers, and with a movable mike in his hand he was persuading the people assembled to pay to the fund their little mite. He was a very efficient man in this work, speaking easily and fluently,

and, as I could see, with occasional flashes of humor, for his audience frequently laughed. As a result of his eloquence, there was an uninterrupted flow of members of the audience coming close to him and placing in a box whatever they had to offer. This young man spoke in the Ashanti (Twi) language. African people have generally very fine voices, and the Ashanti or Twi language, with an occasional sing-song character (because it is a 'tone language', like most other West African languages, and Chinese and Burmese) sounded quite pleasant to hear. People were coming with their shillings, and little boys and girls with their pennies. In British West Africa, the English monetary system of pounds, shillings and pence is current—only the West African shilling is of a mixed metal, nickel and copper, and the pennies are of bronze. It was indeed an eloquent commentary on the earnest desire of the people for "education, education, and still more education", that little children came and offered their precious pennies most voluntarily. It reminded one of the 'Paisa Funds' which the Sikhs have in India—welcoming from the poor the proverbial widow's mite. I was also reminded of the way in which Mahatma Gandhi used to collect money for the uplift of the *Harijans* or People of the humblest ranks. When the collection was going on in this way, I noticed that our Sindhi friends, who were also seated close to the Chief, were holding a hurried consultation among themselves, and they collected whatever small cash they had with them, which came up to near about a pound, and they offered that as their on-the-spot contribution. I also asked permission to give something, and I paid a couple of pounds which was accepted with acclamation. In this way, the money was collected; and after that there would be an adjournment to prepare for the commencement of the afternoon and evening Community Dance.

Mr. Barton and the Chief requested me to say something. I was introduced to the audience as being from India, and they were also eager to hear me. I spoke in English, and what a blessing is the English language in forming international contacts like this! The aforesaid young man in shorts, who was acting as a sort of a Master of Ceremonies, interpreted my talk in Ashanti, sentence by sentence. He seemed to make a very good job of it. I spoke for about 15 minutes, and mentioned some facts regarding Indian education and our literacy campaign, on Gandhiji's work for the masses, and on our various problems which agreed with those of West Africa; and I also spoke of the ideals of Indianism or the Indian Attitude to the World, incidentally mentioning names like those of Rabindranath, Gandhi and Nehru, which they all knew. There is now a tremendous enthusiasm for our Prime Minister Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Ghana Leader and Premier Dr. Kwame Nkrumah I heard described as "the Nehru of West Africa". I spoke also about the advantages of the Commonwealth as a Union of Free Nations, and I also gave as my personal opinion that we could maintain both in India and in Gold Coast a very close connexion with each other through the Commonwealth. I thanked the Chief and Mr. Barton and the organizers of the Literacy Day, on my behalf and on that of my Indian friends; and then we took leave from the meeting.

But African hospitality would not permit us to go away immediately. We were taken to the house of the local Chief of Juoben, who, as I said before, was absent in Accra. It was a substantial brick-built house of one storey, and the rooms were round a quadrangle forming the inner part of the building, comparable to the *angan* or courtyard of an Indian house. We entered by the front door, and were led through a little verandah into the reception room of the house, which corresponded to the *baithak-khana*

or *bahirer-ghar* of a Bengali dwelling. This was adorned in a semi-European style with chairs and tables, and embroidered or stamped African cloth for table-covers and window-curtains. There were book-shelves with books, and picture-calendars on the walls, framed family photographs and other nick-nacks, just as anywhere in the world. The members of the Chief's family, including some tall, nice-looking young men, received us most politely, even enthusiastically, and offered us lemonade and beer. I expressed the desire to see the inside of an Ashanti house, and they most gladly took us into the inner court-yard from the reception room. Here was a spacious court-yard with a couple of trees at two corners, and the court-yard was paved with bricks. Everything was nice and clean. In former days, the court-yard would be of hardened clay, the walls similarly of clay with decorative designs in high relief in the form of circles, spirals and undulating lines, with carved wooden doors, and roofs of thatch. There were ranges of rooms on three sides which were used by the members of the family as living or sleeping rooms, and the furniture was of wood, mostly European or international in style. At the other end, opposite to the side where the reception room was, there was no masonry room but some hutments which were open in front and had a wall only at the end which was also the boundary-wall of the court-yard. I think there was a hand-pump near these hutments, and these were used as a family kitchen and also as a store-house. There was a stack of fire-wood, and there were several fire-places like Indian *chulhas* made of three mounds of earth on which the pot was to be placed, and fire-wood lighted below. Cooking was going on, with lots of earthenware pots and pans and water vessels. A number of young women, most of them quite comely, and dressed in the colourful African 'cloth' and head-cover,



were moving about, and they were very curious at the advent of so many Indians. But they were all smiles for their guests. They were the daughters and the young wives of the family. I saw preparations for a big meal in progress. A middle-aged woman was making a paste from soaked beans by pounding them on a flat piece of stone with another small round stone, exactly like making a paste of spices on a curry-stone in an Indian kitchen. A large quantity of yam was collected, and they were peeling them off, prior to boiling and mashing them for making the staple food *fou-fou*. The vegetables were being sliced for the inevitable Palm-Oil Chop. We lingered on for some minutes in this peaceful though animated scene, which was exactly like a reflex of an Indian family in the intimacy of its women's life in the court-yard. As a matter of fact, it made us realize that there exists a very great resemblance between the life of Africa and that of India.

As we had to return to Kumasi for other engagements, we took a reluctant farewell from our kind hosts, and got into our cars for the drive back. The entire experience, for me at any rate, was quite unique, and I was thinking about the Essential Unity of Man everywhere in the world.

( From the "Bulletin of the West Bengal Headmasters' Association", Calcutta, Vol. V, No. 2, August, 1956 : revised, with some additions. )

EXPLANATION  
OF THE "AFRIKA SEAL" ON THE TITLE-PAGE



In the centre of the Seal is a typical *Adinkra* symbol as in use among the Akans of Ghana. This symbol stands for the prayer in the Akan language : *Nyame, biribi wo soro, ma no meka me nsa* "O God, there is something above ; let it reach me". This pattern was stamped on paper and hung above the lintel of a door in the palace. The King of Ashanti used to touch this lintel, then his forehead, then his breast, repeating these words three times. It is sometimes stamped on sheep-skin or leather. ( See J. B. Danquah's "Akan Doctrine of God", p. 187 ; see also pp. xix, xx. )

The Central Figure thus stands as a Symbol of a Prayer or Aspiration from the heart of Africa which has a universal appeal.

In the four pockets at each corner are the following Symbols :

Top Left, the Double-Axe of Shango, the Thunder-God of the Yorubas and other West African peoples.

Top Right, a painted Flower from a wooden Sun-Mask from a Congo Bantu tribe.

These two Symbols, from native African religion, stand for the idea—"Strong as the Thunderbolt, Tender as the Flower".

Bottom Left : the Cross, signifying the great teaching of Christ, which is also universal, viz. Love of God and Love of Man, as the first duty in life (see Gospel of St. Mark, 12, verses 28-31), and the example of Christ's life, viz. sacrificing oneself to liberate others.

Bottom Right : the Crescent of Islam, signifying Complete Surrender to God, and Faith in God, and Doing Good to Man as the primary duties of Man (cf. Surah Al-Baqara, II, 177 ff. ; also Surah Al-Anbiya, XXI, 94).

The designs on the borders (Concentric Circles and Spirals at the top ; Fasces and Zig-zag Lines on two sides) are decorative *motifs* from the art of the Bantu peoples of Congo State.

The "Afrika Seal," designed by the Author, seeks to symbolize in the back-ground of African decorative art, some great concepts of *Africanism* originating among the peoples of Black Africa, together with the ideals of Christianity and Islam, at their highest and most universal, which have come to enrich the spiritual as well as social life of Black Africa as of many other parts of the World.

### SOME PRINTING MISTAKES

- P. 27, line 9 : Read "Yorubas" for "Yorubus."
- P. 52, line 26 : Correct to "Adesoji Aderemi."
- P. 53, line 6 from bottom : Correct "p. 8" to "p. 19."
- P. 60, line 9 : Correct *Babalowos* to *Babalawos*.
- P. 85, line 9 from bottom : Read "Christian."
- P. 93, line 21 : Correct *Ktemn* to *Ktema*.
- P. 104, line 19 : Delete the quotation marks.
- P. 140, line 4 from bottom : Read "an" for "a."
- P. 144, line 16 : Read *ekome kèhì s'ì lè*.
- P. 168, last line : Correct "couse" to "course."
- P. 188, line 26 : Read "Massaquoi."

## LIST OF PLATES

1. Language Map of Africa. Based on Map at page 353 in "An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics" by Prof. Dr. H. A. Gleason, Jr., Henry Holt & Co. Inc., New York, 1955.

2. Scene of African (Nubian) Life, engraved round the rim of a flat bronze bowl discovered in a Romano-Nubian cemetery at Karanog, between Aswan and Wadi Halfa. About 300 A. D. Now in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, U. S. A. Height, 0.173 m., diameter 0.262 m.. Milking of cows and storing of milk in vessels before an African Queen in front of her dwelling, attended by a Young Girl and a Woman. (Egyptian and Roman influences apparent in the drawing.) See pp. 19, 53. From Sir Leonard Woolley and Dr. D. Randall-MacIver's Memoir on the Excavations at Karanog, Philadelphia, 1910.

3. Head in Terracotta, from Jemaa, Northern Nigeria. More than 2000 years old (? about the middle of the 1st Millennium B. C. ), discovered about 25 feet below ground-level in a tin mine. Important specimen of Nok Culture from Ancient West Africa. From *L'Art Nègre*, "Presence Africaine, 10, 11", Paris, 1951, Plate 7, illustrating article by William Fagg on 'Nigerian Art before Jesus Christ', pp. 91-95.

4. Bronze Life-size Head from Ife in Yorubaland, Nigeria; about 10th century A. D. In the Museum of the Oni at Ife. Head of some God or King. (The borings above and below the lips are for fixing moustache and beard.) From Leon Underwood's "Bronzes of West Africa", Alec Tiranti Ltd., London, 1949, Plate 5.

5. Bronze Head from Ife, discovered in 1938. Presented by Dr. W. R. Bascom to the Ife Museum. Probably a Goddess or a Queen. From *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 37, 1951, p. 24. The straight lines on this beautiful face show a form of incision tattooing.

6. (i), (ii), (iii). Three Terracotta Heads in Ancient Yoruba style, showing incision tattooing as in the face in Plate 5. (i) A Young Man, (ii) and (iii) Young Women. From photographs.

7. Bronze Head of Young Woman (Princess, or Queen) from Benin. In two versions: (i) and (iii), with a base with reliefs of fish, in the Berlin Ethnological Museum, and (iii) without a base, in the British Museum. A bronze copy of (iii), made in Calcutta, is in the Author's Collection. See p. 51. The choker necklace and the peaked head-dress are typical of Benin, and are made from coral beads. From photographs. Date: late 15th century? But the head has been also considered to be a portrait of a Benin Queen, Iyoba Eson (about 1640 A. D.), Mother of King (Oba) Ahenzae.

8. Benin Bronze Head, in the British Museum. 17th century? The high collar coming up to the lower lip is typical of Benin, and is made from long coral beads.

9. Bronze Statuette from Benin, in the British Museum: A General or King on horse-back. 16th or 17th century. (Plate 42 in Leon Underwood's Book mentioned above).

10. Group of Figures in the round in Bronze, representing a Benin King and his Women. In the Berlin Ethnological Museum. 17th or 18th century, or later. From a photograph.

11. High-Relief Plaque in Bronze, of a Benin King in full regalia, and two Attendants kneeling. In the British Museum. (Plate 54 in Leon Underwood's Book.) 15th century A. D. ?

12. Hunter shooting at a Bird on a Tree. Bronze Plaque in relief. In the Berlin Museum of Ethnology. 15th century ? From a photograph.

13. Three Bronze Statuettes from Benin : (i) Young Man playing on a flute, (ii) Young Girl in dancing pose, and (iii) a Queen in court regalia. In the Berlin Museum. From photographs. (i) and (ii) are earlier than (iii) in age : 15th-18th centuries.

14. Bronze Cock : Benin work. 15th century. In the Berlin Museum. From a photograph.

15. Stone Head of God or Ancestor, from Esie, Ilorin Province, Nigeria. Early Yoruba work, From *Nigeria Magazine*, No. 37, 1951, p. 61.

16. Yoruba Wood-sculptures : (i) and (ii) Mother and Child (probably Odudua, the Mother-Goddess) ; and Loango (Congo) Wood Sculpture, no. (iii) Head Study, called "the Listener". Nos. (i) and (iii) from "Arts of West Africa" by Michael A. Sadler, London & Oxford, 1935, Plates III and IV ; and No. (ii) from "L'Art Nègre" (as under Plate 3), Paris 1951, Figure 43, illustrating article on Yoruba Art by William Fagg.

17. Congo (Bantu African) Sculpture in Wood. Work of the Baluba Tribe. Figure of Mother and Child : Front, Back and Side Views. Cicatrice tattooing on body of the Mother. 19th Century.

18. Congo (Bantu African) Sculptures in Wood : (i) Kneeling Young Woman ; (ii) Mother and Child : both 19th century ; (iii) Portrait Statue of a King of the Baluba tribe. 18th century. From photographs.

19. Three Wood Sculptures from Nigeria. Yoruba work, 19th century. (i) Shango, God of Thunder, on horse-back ; (ii) & (iii) Oya, Goddess of the Niger River, Wife of Shango. Over the heads of the figures are representations of the *labrys* or twy-axe, the symbol of Shango. From Leo Frobenius, *Atlantis X: Die Atlantische Goetterlehre*, Jena, 1926, p. 125.

20. Pen-and-Ink Drawing by Kofi Antubum, Director, Art College, Achimota (Accra) University, Ghana ; an Akan Religious Ceremony—Offering a libation of water before the *Nyame Dua* i. e. "Tree (or Throne) of God"—a three-pronged tree-trunk bearing a vessel with water, a stone axe, and some herbs in it, symbolizing the Divinity.

21. Interior of an Ashanti house in Kumasi. The walls are of clay, with characteristic decorations, and the roof is of thatch. A sacred tree in the court-yard. From "A Vanished Dynasty—Ashanti" by Sir Francis Fuller : London 1921, opp. p. 138.

22. Facade of Houses in the City of Jenne, on the Niger River. Clay Architecture of Upper Niger Territory. From "Des Mirages au Tam-tam" by Germain Beauclair, Grenoble, 1937, p. 86.

23. (i) In Kumasi, at the Residence of a Local Chief. Sri Tirathdas Nankani, Indian Merchant ; Mr. Alexander Atta Yaw Kyerematen, Member of the Ashanti Council ; Dr. S. K. Chatterji with Har Kishan son of Sri Nankani ; the Chief Nana Boakye Agyemen Bampana Bamu ; in front of the Chief, his Interpreter or Herald ; and Members of the Chief's Family. (Photo by Sri Wassia Daswani.)

(ii) The Author with Dr. Obafemi Awolowo, Mrs. Awolowo and three of their Children. Ibadan. (Nigerian Government Photograph.)



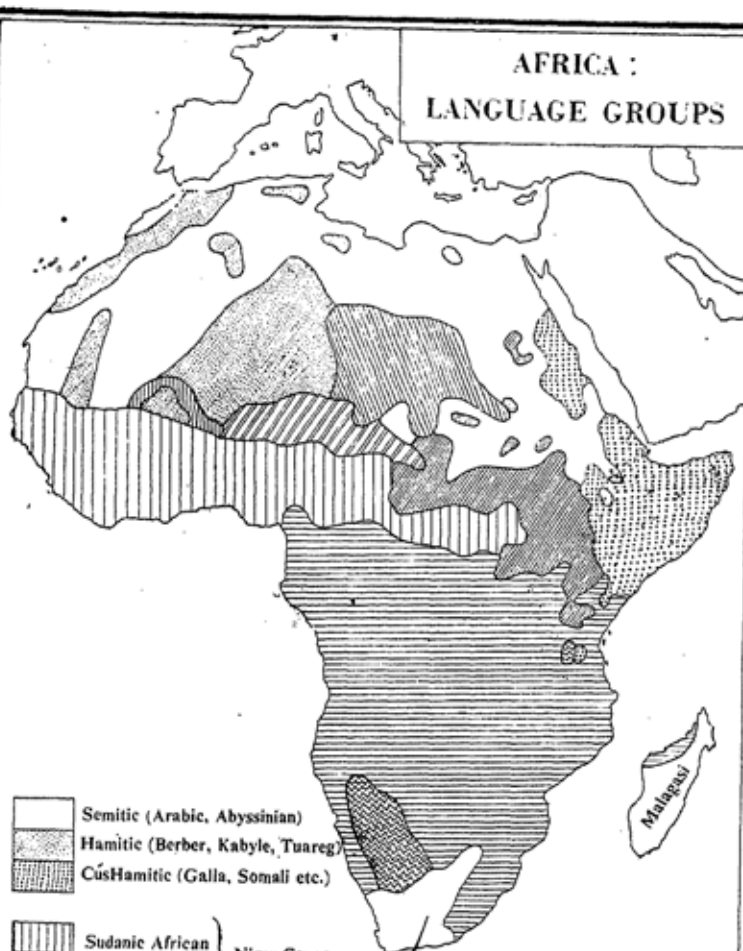
24. (i) At a Literacy Drive Meeting at Juoben in Ghana : the Presiding Chief under the umbrella, Prof. S. K. Chatterji, and Mr. Owen Barton. (Photo by Sri Wassia Daswani.)












(ii) Colonel Brett, Sir Adesoji Aderemi the Oni of Ife, and Prof. S. K. Chatterji, Ife. ( Nigerian Government Photographs. )

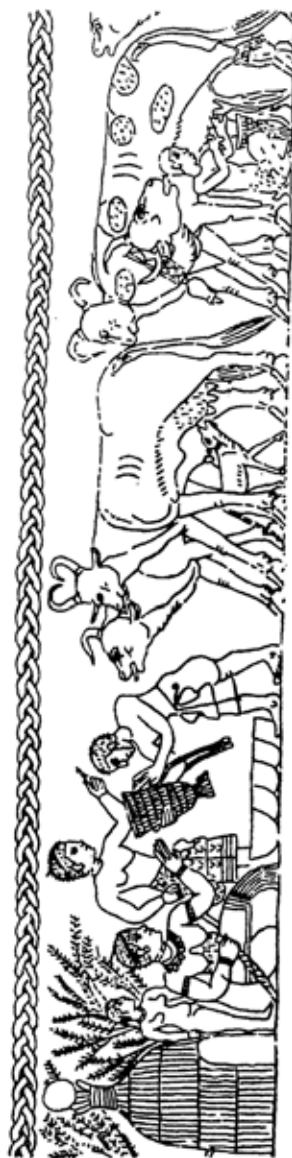
## THE PLATES



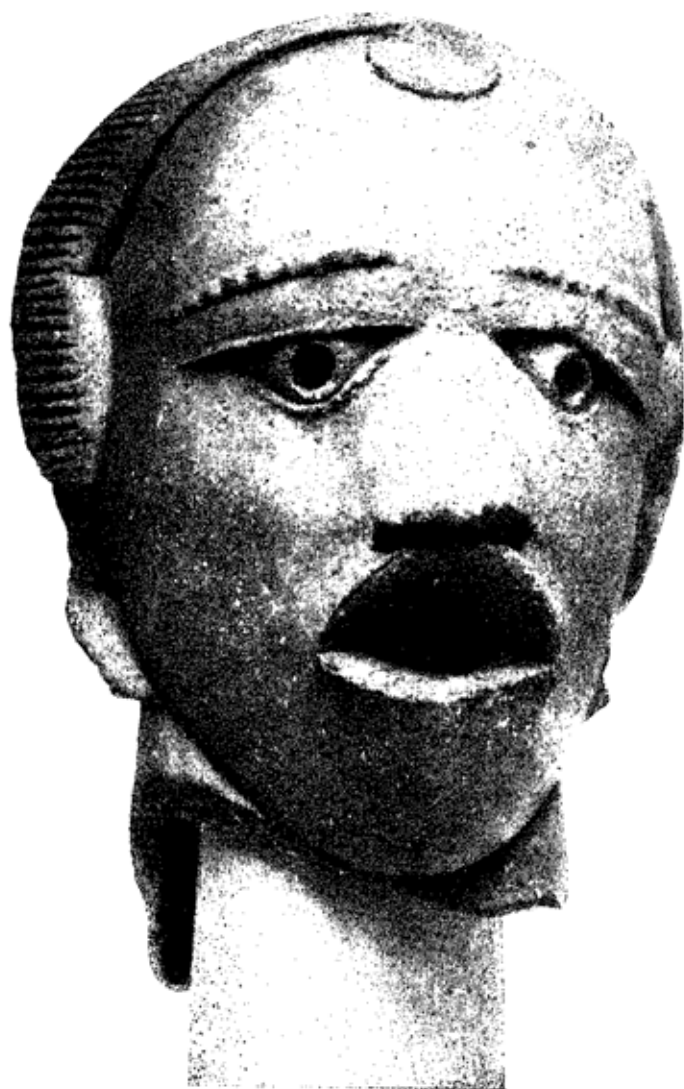
# AFRICA : LANGUAGE GROUPS



-  Semitic (Arabic, Abyssinian)
-  Hamitic (Berber, Kabyle, Tuareg)
-  Cúshamitic (Galla, Somali etc.)
-  Sudanic African
-  Bantu African
-  Songhai
-  Chad (Hausa etc.)
-  Chari-Nile
-  Central Saharan (Kanuri etc.)
-  Bushman and Hottentot
-  English & Afrikaans  
(beside Bantu etc.)



2. A Scene of African Life—Engraved Drawing round the rim of a Bronze Bowl  
from Karanog in Nubia, c. 300 A. D.



3. Terracotta Head, Nok Culture, Nigeria  
Second Half of First Millennium B. C.



4. A God, or King : Bronze Head from Ife, Nigeria  
10th Century A. D.

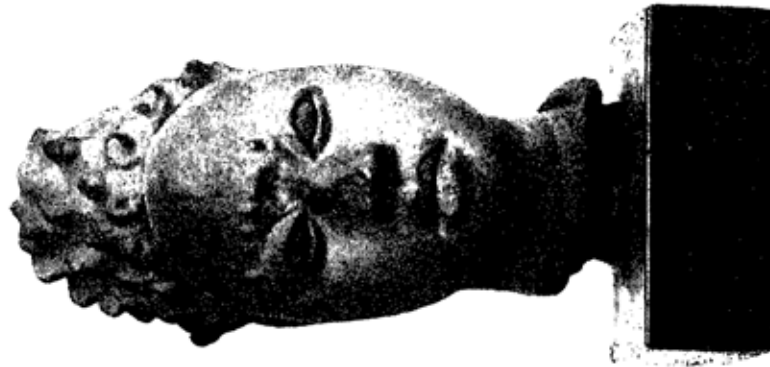


5. Goddess or Queen : Bronze Head from Ife, Nigeria  
10th Century A. D.

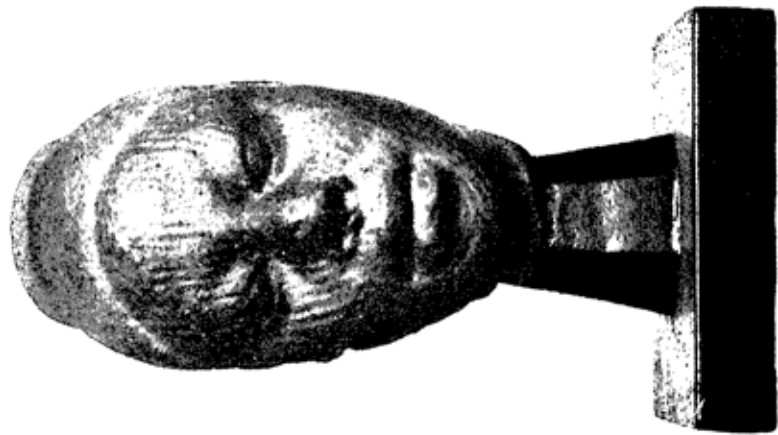




(i)



(ii)



(iii)

6. Terracotta Heads, Early Yoruba Work  
? 10th—15th Centuries A. D.



(i)



(ii)



(iii)

7. Bronze Head of Young Princess or Queen, from Benin : 15th Century, or ? 1640 A. D.



8. Benin Bronze Head with Coral Bead Necklace and Cap  
? 17th Century A. D.



9. Bronze Statuette of Horseman  
Benin ; 16th or 17th Century.



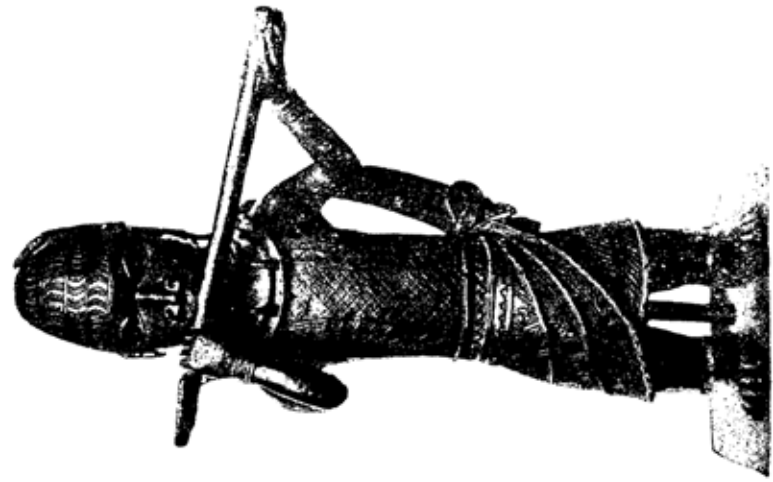
10. Group of Figures in Bronze : a King and his Wives  
Benin : 17th or 18th Century.



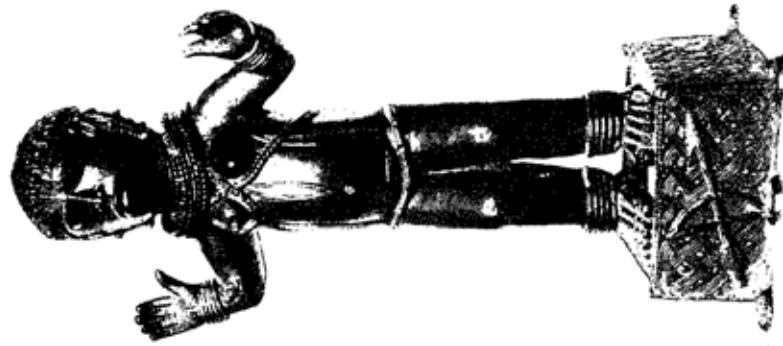
11. Benin Bronze Plaque in High Relief :  
A King with two kneeling Attendants : 15th or 16th Century.



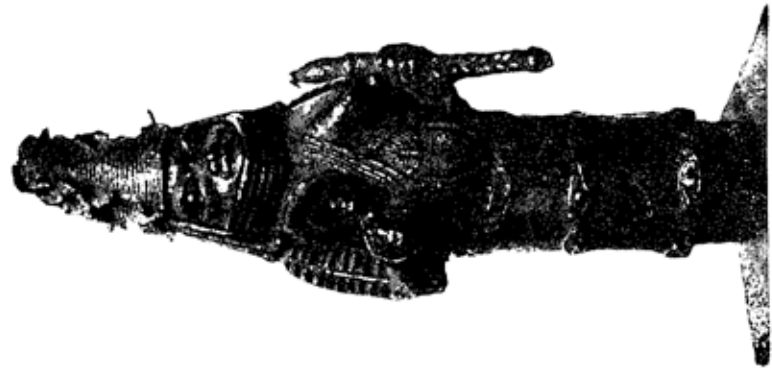
12. Bronze Plaque : Hunter shooting at a Bird  
Benin : ? 15th Century



(i)



(ii)



(iii)

13. Three Bronze Statuettes from Benin :  
(i) Youth playing on Flute, (ii) Girl in Dance Pose, (iii) Queen in Regalia  
15th—18th Centuries.





14. Cock in Bronze, Benin : ? 15th Century.



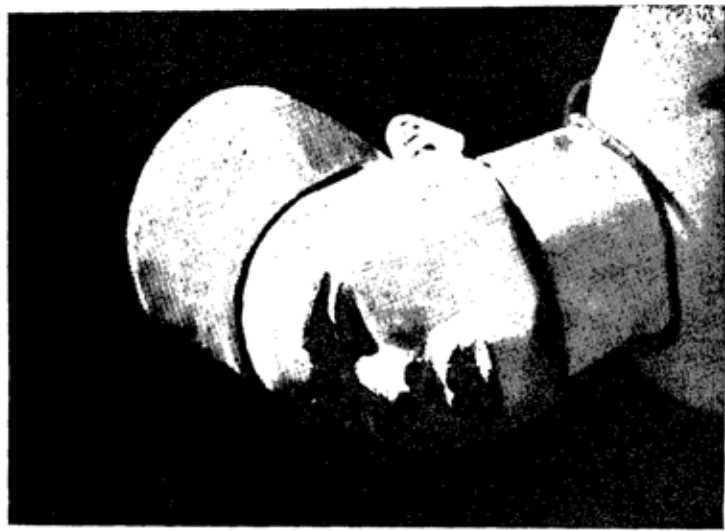
15. Stone Head of God or Ancestor : Old Yoruba Work  
? 17th Century.



(i)

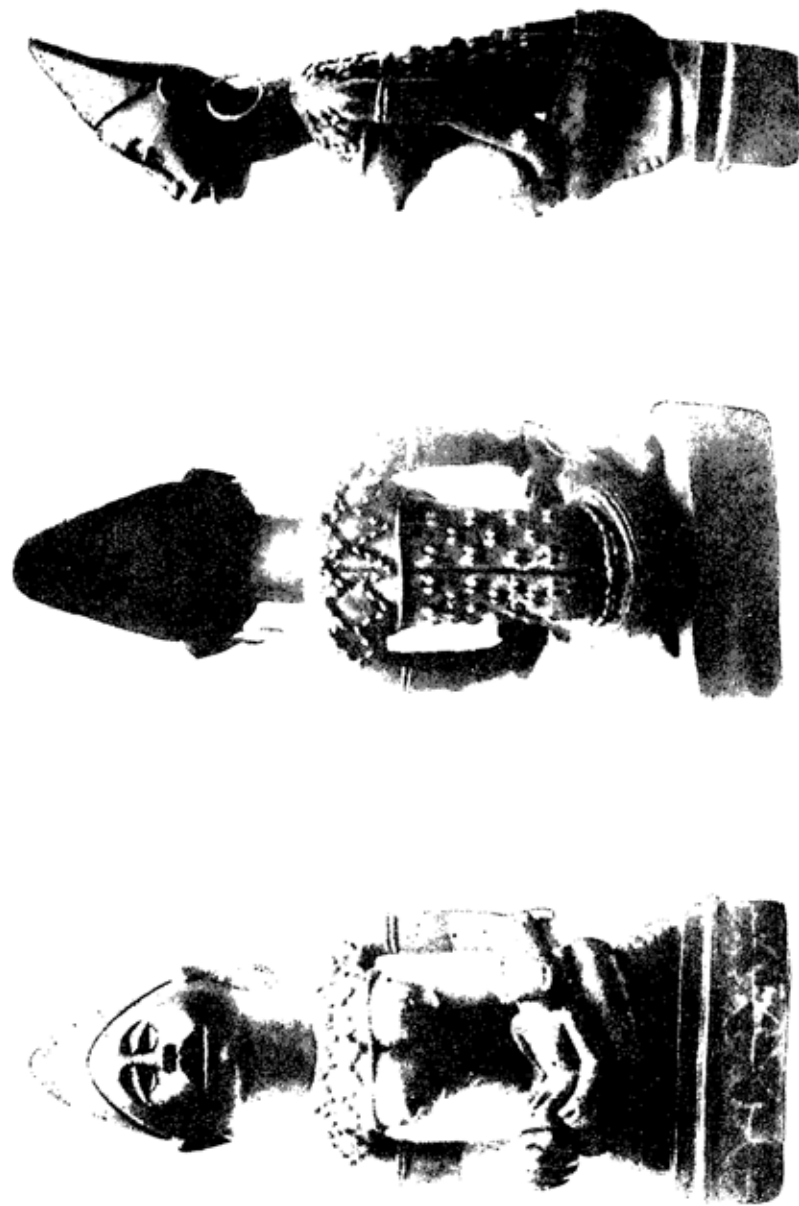


(ii)

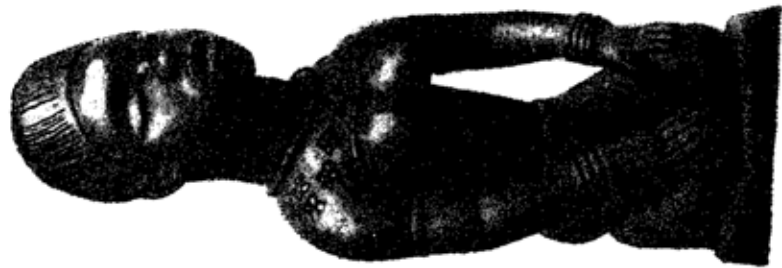


(iii)

16. (i) & (ii) Wooden Figures of Mother and Child, Yoruba Work, 19th Century ;  
 (iii) Head of Wooden Statuette, Bantu ( Loango, Congo ) Work, 19th Century.



17. Front, Back and Side Views of Wooden Statuette of Mother and Child,  
Congo, Baluba Tribe ; Cicatrice Tattooing on Body of the Mother : 19th Century.



(i)

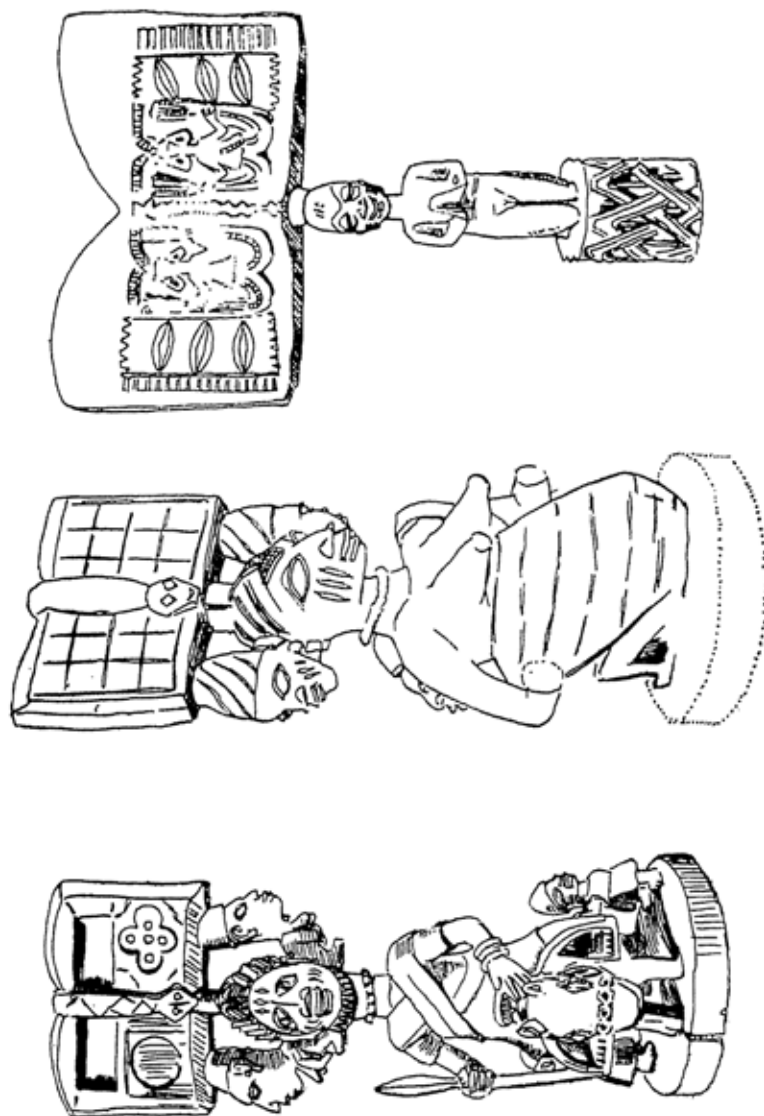


(ii)



(iii)

18. Congo (Baluba) Figures in Wood : (i) Kneeling Girl, (ii) Mother and Child, and (iii) Portrait Figure of an old Baluba King : 18th—19th Centuries.

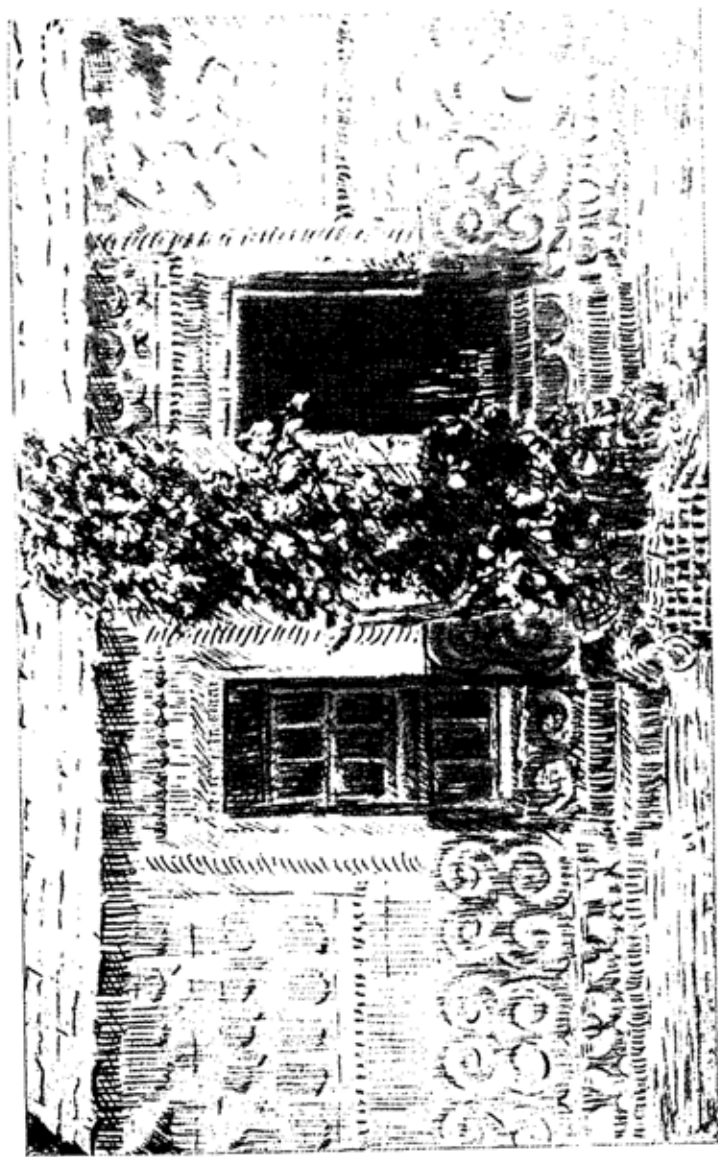


19. Yoruba Wooden Cult Figures of (i) Shango, the God of Thunder, and (ii) and (iii) of Oya, the Goddess of the Niger River, Wife of Shango ( with double-axe symbol of the Thunder God above the Figures ) : 19th Century.



20. An Akan (Ashanti) Religious Rite—Pouring a libation of water before the symbol of the Supreme God

Pen and ink sketch by Kofi Antubam, Director, Art Department, Achimota University, Accra, Ghana.



21. Interior of an old-style Ashanti House, Kumasi : 19th Century.





22. Facade of Houses in Clay :at]Jenne.  
Upper Niger River : 19th Century.



23. (i) Kumasi ( Ghana ), August 1, 1954, Sri Tirathdas Nankani, Mr. Alexander A. Y. Kyerematen, Prof. S. K. Chatterji, Sriman Har Kishan, Chief Nana Boakyie Agyemen Bampana Bamu, the Chief's Niece, his Wife, 3 Other Members of his Family, and his 'Linguist' in front of him. ( Photo by Sri Wassia Daswani. )



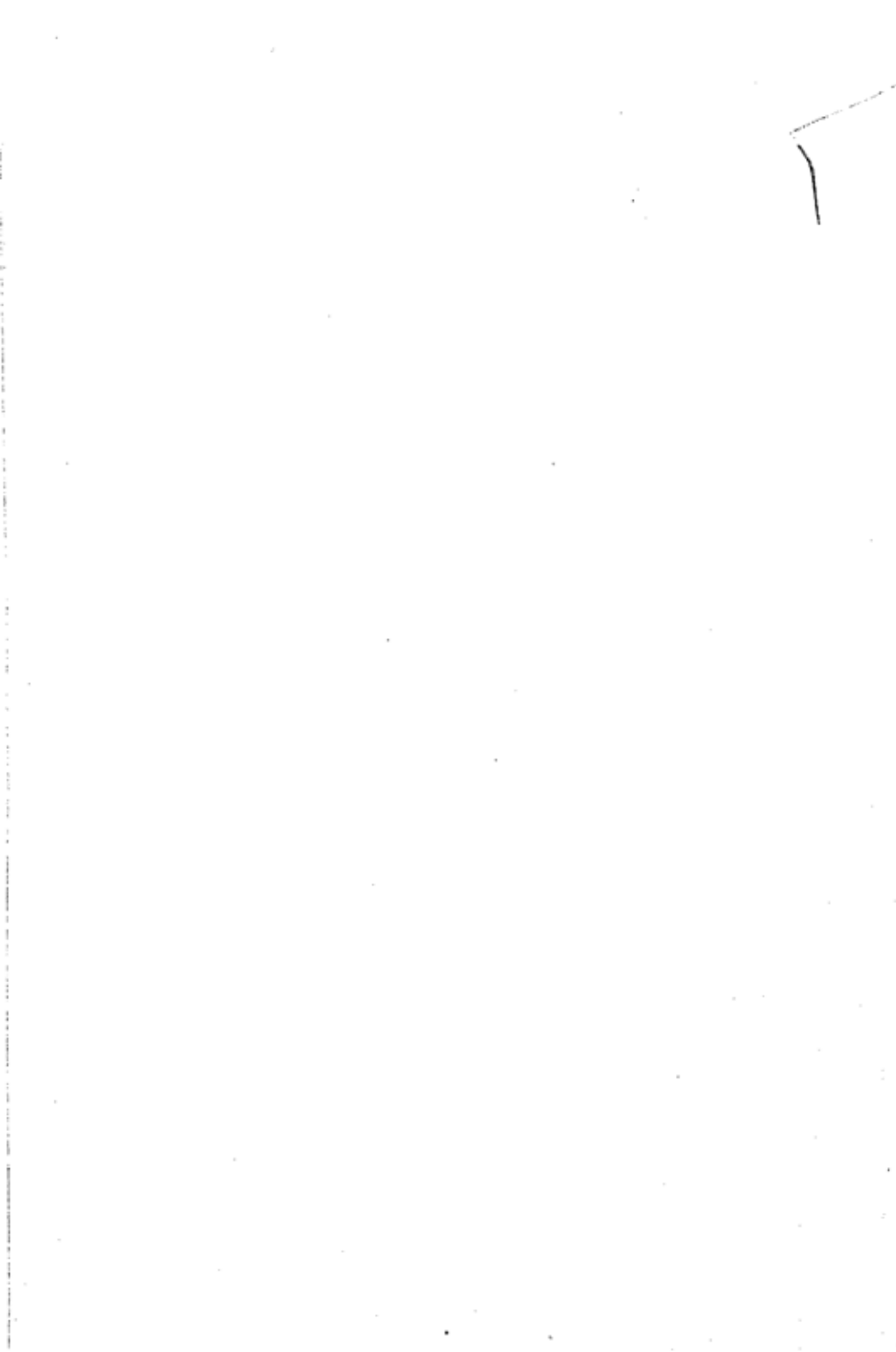
23. (ii) Ibadan, Nigeria, August 6, 1954. Prof. S. K. Chatterji with Dr. Obafemi Awolowo, Mrs. Awolowo and Three of their Children.



24. (i) Ghana, August 1, 1954. A Literacy Drive Day at Juoben near Kumasi. From Right to Left : Presiding Chief, Prof. S. K. Chatterji. Mr. Owen Barton. ( Photo by Sri Wassia Daswani. )



24. (ii) Ife, Nigeria, August 6, 1954. Colonel Brett, Sir Adesoji Aderemi the Oni of Ife, Prof. S. K. Chatterji. ( Nigeria Government Photos. )





6-12/75

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